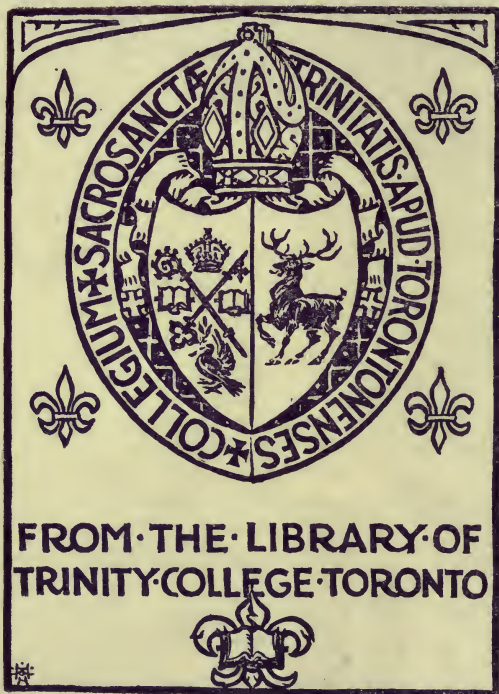


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THE
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTED
IN THE WAYS OF
THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH :

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES

Delivered in St. James's Church, Goshen, N. Y. during
the years 1840-42.

BY REV. J. A. SPENCER, A. M.

LATE RECTOR.

I speak concerning Christ and the Church.—ST. PAUL



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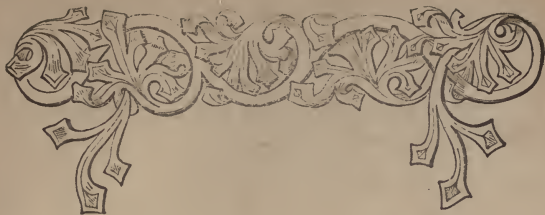
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P R E F A C E .

THE Discourses now presented to the public, as illustrating, in part, a course of instruction in the ways of the Gospel and the Church, were prepared and used in the regular discharge of parochial duty, and without the slightest idea of publication. They claim, therefore, to be simply the result of honest, straight-forward, diligent effort, according to the ability God has given, “rightly to divide the Word of truth,” and faithfully to do this important part of a parish priest’s duty, which is “to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord’s family, to seek for Christ’s sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of

this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."

It having been my unfeigned desire and constant care to teach faithfully and fully what the Church teaches, and *only* what she teaches ; so I am not aware, that in any thing I have gone beyond the Catholic Faith, as held and proclaimed by our branch of the Universal Church ; neither, it is trusted, have I been afraid or ashamed, as occasion offered, to declare " the whole counsel of God," in all things relating to our eternal interests.

As it has pleased Almighty God to send affliction upon me, in consequence of which I am unfitted, for a season, for the public duties of the priestly office, I have been led to think that in the present way, if no other, I might do my share toward "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints ;" especially at this juncture, when are seen arrayed against the Church the motley hosts of the infidel and ungodly world, factious schism, and soul-destroying heresy ; and when many, both within and out of the pale of the Church, are earnestly seeking for guidance and direction in her most holy ways.

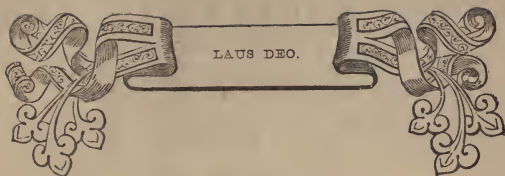
May the Great Head of the Church, the Author and Finisher of our faith, bestow His blessing upon this and every effort, made in His faith and fear, to spread abroad the truth as it is in Jesus, and to promote the honor and glory of His holy Name !

NEW-YORK CITY,

Tuesday before Easter, 1844.



HE must needs be a weak divine, that is not "mighty in the Scriptures," as it is said of Apollos. And, Lord, how many things are necessary to give a man a right understanding of the Sacred Writings! I confess, we are fallen into a very confident age, wherein to interpret Scripture is counted the most obvious and easy thing; and every mechanic, that scarce understands common sense, will venture on the expounding of these mysterious books. We have so childishly departed from the error of the Romish Church, in asserting an inexplicable obscurity of the Scriptures, even in things necessary, that for fear of this Charybdis, we are swallowed up in as dangerous a Scylla, to make the Scriptures even despicable and contemptible. For, as Nazianzen truly saith, "that which is thus easily understood, is generally with as much ease slighted and contemned." But we know who they are, who "run from one bad extreme to another." For it is certain, that rightly to understand the Holy Scriptures is a very difficult thing, especially for us, who live at so great a distance from those times wherein they were written, and those persons and churches to whom they were directed. It is no slender measure of the knowledge of antiquity, history, philology, that is requisite to qualify a man for such an undertaking. They know nothing of the Holy Scriptures that know not this. And, therefore, those unlearned and ignorant men, that venture on the exposition of Scripture, being perfect strangers to these parts of learning, must of necessity wrest them to their own and their hearers' destruction.—**BP. BULL.**



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Yes, if the intensities of hope and fear
Attract us still, and passionate exercise
Of lofty thoughts, the way before us lies
Distinct with signs—thro' which, in fixed career,
As thro' a zodiac, moves the ritual year
Of England's Church—Stupendous mysteries!
Which whoso travels in her bosom, eyes
As he approaches them, with solemn cheer.
Enough for us to cast a transient glance
The circle through.

WORDSWORTH.

INTRODUCTION.

WATCH YE, STAND FAST IN THE FAITH, QUIT YOU LIKE MEN, BE STRONG.
ST. PAUL.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, WHO HAST INSTRUCTED THY HOLY CHURCH WITH THE HEAVENLY DOCTRINE OF THY EVANGELIST ST. MARK; GIVE US GRACE THAT BEING NOT LIKE CHILDREN CARRIED AWAY WITH EVERY BLAST OF VAIN DOCTRINE, WE MAY BE ESTABLISHED IN THE TRUTH OF THY HOLY GOSPEL, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.



INTRODUCTION.

WHEN the publication of the present volume was determined upon, it was intended to present it as arranged according to the various seasons of the Church, taking for granted that its readers are already instructed, not only in the fundamental principles relating to the Divine origin, constitution, and perpetuity of the “body of Christ,” but also concerning the Festivals and Fasts, and the meaning of the Church in their appointment: further reflection, however, has suggested the propriety, if not urgent need, of some brief yet comprehensive introductory remarks on such points as are infrequently dwelt upon in the Discourses, and which, in fact, formed part of the teaching “from house to house,” which it was the author’s duty to perform. In order to accomplish this end, as succinctly and as satisfactorily as possible, let me beg attention to certain matters which I fear are not generally well understood among us, or at least, which are not thoroughly learned and digested by the great majority of the members of the Church: at present I must confine myself to three points:—

I. WHAT AND WHERE IS THE CHURCH ; AND OUR CONSEQUENT OBLIGATIONS ?

II. THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE LITURGY.

III. BRIEF NOTICES OF THE FESTIVALS AND FASTS, AND HOLY SEASONS.

I. What are we to understand by "the Church?" how are we to know what and where is the true Church of Christ? by what means shall we discriminate between the numerous bodies, or societies, commonly called "churches," and determine which has a right to the name, and which not? in what way shall we arrive at the truth in this matter, and ascertain our own bounden duty and obligations? These and similar questions have been often put of late, and whether we will or no, we must, in effect at least, answer them. Now I suppose that no one, who is willing to read a book such as the present volume professes to be, doubts or denies that there is really such a society as that to which the name "Church" has been given: no one, except the wild fanatic or enthusiast, makes any question that it is a society composed of men or human beings; that it is governed by certain laws, which are administered by certain officers; that it is united in certain well defined articles of faith, certain sacraments, ordinances, and other means of grace; that it has certain powers and privileges by Divine institution; and that its officers derive their authority from the Great Head of the Church, through the channel of His appointment. The existence of that body, called the "Church," being acknowledged, it may be defined to be, that society of men or human beings, who are baptized in the name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; who profess the true faith of Christ, as taught or contained in Holy Scripture ; who maintain union and communion, by joining in the same sacraments, and the same holy worship, in due subjection and obedience to the Head of the body ; and who are under the spiritual guidance and direction of those whom the “Shepherd and Bishop of our souls” has sent or commissioned to feed His sheep.

As this definition covers, I suppose, the whole ground, taking in all that is essential to the being of the Church, it will enable us both to see and know what the Church really is, and also to discriminate between it and the multitude of sects and denominations around us, who one and all claim to be “churches.” In one or more respects, we shall find them *all* to be *wanting*. Some among the societies which have taken their rise since the Reformation, and which would never have had existence but for that event, hold many of the fundamental articles of faith ; as the doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the necessity of Divine grace, the Resurrection, eternal rewards and punishments in the world to come, &c. Others deny most of the articles of faith necessary to salvation ; as the Deity and atoning sacrifice of Christ, the Divinity and Office of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection of the body, eternal punishment, &c. *Not one among them maintains the Gospel in its integrity ; not one among these sects but what has diverged (some not much, others very far) from the straight line of Christian truth and order ; not one but what is*

guilty of schism or heresy, or of both. Thus, THEY HOLD NOT THE FAITH once delivered to the saints.

As respects union and communion in the same sacraments, worship, and discipline, here also the "orthodox Protestant denominations" (as they have been termed) are wanting; for if it is true, as I mean to show, that they have no ministry, i. e. none which derives authority from Christ; if their "ministers" are, in fact, no ministers, having run when they have not been sent, having rashly and wickedly intruded upon the office of Christ's ambassadors, then, as of course, all that they do is without Christ's authority,—nay, in violation of His command; what they esteem "sacraments" are no sacraments; what they regard as "worship" is a rending of Christ's body, by setting up a rival altar against the only true altar; and what they consider as ministerial acts of godly "discipline," are in truth (alas, that it should be so!) schismatical infractions of the priestly office. Thus, THEY HAVE NO SACRAMENTS; they are not assembled in the name, i. e. by the authority of Christ, and so have no promise of blessing or favor at His hands.

Now, as to the ministry, which is usually, in these days, the principal point in dispute, I assert that the Protestant sects are in this, also, wanting. Let me say, that I do not assert it as my own private opinion alone; but as the formally expressed judgment of the English and American branches of the Church Catholic;¹ I do not give it as the

1) IT IS EVIDENT UNTO ALL MEN, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, *that from the Apostles' time*, there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which offices

result of individual study, or as the conclusion to which the evidence in the case has necessarily led me ; nay, in this matter, I am but reiterating the testimony and decision of all ages, and all Christian nations, for fifteen hundred years ; I am only giving utterance again to the wisdom and learning of those holy men, Bishops, Martyrs, and Doctors, in every period of the Church's existence, at whose feet, in the heavenly kingdom, it will indeed be a privilege to sit. I say, then, that forasmuch as at the Reformation on the Continent, the Apostolic succession was departed from, (at first on the plea of *necessity*, though since attempted to be justified as a *right*,) those sects which took their start at that period, two or three of which have lasted unto the present time, and those which have arisen since on the ruins of former ones, have not the ministry of Christ, but only teachers of their own making. Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, being of *Divine* appointment, every thing else which lays claim to the name of Christian ministers, is, of course, of merely *human* origin. The Lord Jesus, the Great Head of the Church, having commissioned His Apostles, and given them chief

were evermore held in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same ; and also by Public Prayer, with Imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful Authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be *continued*, and reverently used and esteemed in this Church, *no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon*, in this (branch of the Catholic) Church, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, *except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto*, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had Episcopal Consecration or Ordination.—*Preface to the Ordinal.*

authority to act in His name ;¹ and they having done so, in ordaining *elders* or *presbyters*,² as well as *deacons*,³ in every Church, and in perpetuating their own office, by setting over these, *Bishops*, or *successors of the Apostles*, as Timothy, Titus, the Angels of the seven Churches,⁴ &c. ; it certainly requires no argument to prove that this alone is the true ministry ; and that all other persons, however excellent and learned they may be, however highly esteemed they may be by a large and respectable body of those called by the name of "Christians," or however much apparent success they may have in their labors, must be usurpers, and pretenders to power and office never given them. I say that

1) "As my Father hath sent me, **EVEN** so send I you," (Jno. xx. 21.) "I am with you **ALWAYS**, *even unto the end of the world*," (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

2) They (the Apostles Paul and Barnabas) "ordained them elders in every city," (Acts xiv. 23.) St. Paul "sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church," (Acts xx. 17.) Both Timothy and Titus are directed to "ordain elders in every city," (2 Tim. ii. 2 ; Tit. i. 5,) etc. See Acts xi. 30 ; James v. 14 ; 1 Pet. v. 1 ; and the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, *passim*.

3) The seven deacons were not only "men of honest report," but also "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," (Acts vi. 3.) They preached the Gospel, as Stephen (Acts vii. 2, &c.) and Philip, (Acts viii. 5, 12 ; xxi. 8 ;) they baptized, as Philip, (Acts viii. 12, 38 ;) and when they had "used the office of a deacon well, they purchased to themselves a good degree," (1 Tim. iii. 13,) that is, they became fitted for the next higher grade of the ministry, viz., the priesthood.

4) 2 Tim. i. 6 ; Tit. i. 5 ; Rev. ii. iii. Besides these, viz., Timothy, Titus, &c., who had the power of ordaining and governing the Church, (as we know they did,) there were Matthias and Barnabas elevated to the Apostleship, or Bishop's office, as we now understand the term, (Acts i. 22-26 ; xiv. 4 ;) instances enough, one would think, to convince every candid person that the ministry of Christ is composed of various orders, each of which has its peculiar functions and powers ; yes, instances enough to show, that by and through the first order only, does Christ, the Head, bestow authority to act in His name, and to edify His "body," the Church ; for let it never be forgotten, that not a solitary instance of ordination by mere presbyters can be found in Scripture, or in the records of all antiquity.

these cannot be considered as “ambassadors for Christ,” or “stewards of the mysteries of God,” because they do not pretend to derivation of power through the laying on of the Bishop’s hands, having thrust away from them these successors of the Apostles; and because they have set up a new thing,¹ of their own invention, and never heard of in the world till recently, viz., that there is only one order of ministers; that they are all on an equality, &c.² If the faith and

1) That religion hath the greatest advantage which appeareth in the *newest dress*, as if we looked for another faith to be delivered to the saints; whereas in Christianity there can be no concerning truth which is not ancient; and *WHATSOEVER IS TRULY NEW, IS CERTAINLY FALSE*. Look then for purity in the fountain, and strive to embrace the *first faith*, to which you cannot have a more probable guide than the *CREED*, received in all ages of the Church; and to this I refer you, as it leads you to the *SCRIPTURES*, from whence it was at first deduced.—BP. PEARSON, *Dedication to his Exposition of the Creed*.

2) O nation utterly without knowledge, without sense! We are not through error of mind deceived, but some wicked thing hath undoubtedly bewitched us, if we forsake that government, the use whereof *universal experience* hath for so many years approved, and betake ourselves unto a regiment *neither appointed of God Himself*, as they who favor it pretend, *nor till yesterday ever heard of among men*. * * * * Nor was this order peculiar unto some few churches, but *the whole world universally* became subject thereunto; insomuch as *THEY DID NOT ACCOUNT IT TO BE A CHURCH WHICH WAS NOT SUBJECT UNTO A BISHOP*. It was the general received persuasion of the ancient Christian world, that *Ecclesia est in Episcopo* (St. Cyprian) “the outward being of a Church consisteth in the having of a bishop.” * * * * A very strange thing sure it were that such a discipline as ye speak of, should be taught by Christ and His Apostles in the Word of God, and no Church ever have found it out, nor received it till this present time; contrariwise, the government against which ye bend yourselves be observed every where throughout all generations and ages of the Christian world, no Church ever perceiving the Word of God to be against it. We require you to *find out but one Church upon the face of the whole earth*, that has been ordered by your discipline, or hath not been ordered by ours, that is to say, by Episcopal regiment, sithence the time that the blessed Apostles were here conversant.—HOOKER’S *Eccles. Polity*. Bk. VII. c. i. § 4; c. v. § 2; Preface, c. iv. § 1

practice of the Church Catholic in all ages have any weight with us, then must we unqualifiedly condemn those who have cast off the Apostolic succession; if it be true, that "Whatsoever is truly new, is certainly false," then have we no alternative; sectarian ministers, of all sorts and names, are but of yesterday, and therefore their claims are certainly false: if it be certain, beyond all possibility of doubt, that "always, every where, and by all," the three orders have been received and obeyed as of Divine appointment, then indeed is our duty plainly marked out before us; we must adhere to this ministry, we must not dare to depart from it; and we must set our faces steadily against all "them which cause divisions and offences, (as sectarian teachers do,) contrary to the doctrine which we have learned; and AVOID THEM."¹ Thus, as we see, the various sects and denominations in Christian lands, HAVE NO MINISTRY; and having no ministry, as I have before said, they cannot have the sacraments; cannot be admitted into covenant with God by Baptism; cannot feed on the precious Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper; cannot have the guides appointed of God for teaching, preaching, preserving, and perpetuating the true faith; and cannot be safe against the insidious attacks of destructive and "damnable heresies."

If then, the question is asked, where or what is the Church? the answer has already been given: wherever the three orders are found, who preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, in Christ's name, i. e., by His authority, there is the Church, and there only. Wherever we find the

1) Rom. xvi. 17.

Apostolic succession maintained, and the fundamental articles of faith, summed up in the Creed, held and taught, there, must we acknowledge, does the Church exist, and nowhere else. And though we do not deny the possession of Christian graces and excellences by many whom we regard as in a state of schism or heresy, yet we have no liberty or permission to deviate in the slightest degree from the "strait and narrow way." We may not, as we love our own souls, nay we dare not, peril our eternal salvation on any but the ministry in the three orders.¹ We dare not separate ourselves from that noble army of martyrs who have handed down to us the one true faith, and bound upon us to "reverence the Deacons as Jesus Christ, and the Bishop as the Father; and the Presbyters as the council of God, and the

1) They certainly *hazard their salvation* at a strange rate, who separate themselves from such a Church as ours is, wherein the Apostolical succession, *the root of all Christian communion*, hath been so entirely preserved, and the Word and Sacraments are so effectually administered; and all to go into such assemblies and meetings as can have no pretence to the great promise of my text, ("Lo, I am with you always," &c.) For it is manifest that this promise was made *only to the Apostles and their successors*, even unto the end of the world. Whereas in the private meetings, where their teachers have no Apostolical or Episcopal imposition of hands, they have no ground to pretend to succeed the Apostles, nor by consequence any right to the Spirit which our Lord here promiseth; without which, although they preach their hearts out, I do not see what spiritual advantage can accrue to their hearers by it. And therefore, whatsoever they may think of it, *for my own part, I would not be without this promise of our Saviour for all the world*, as knowing that not only myself, but the whole Catholic Church is highly concerned in it; it being by virtue of this promise that the Church is continually acted, guided, and assisted by the Spirit of God, and so the ordinary means of grace are made effectual to salvation, which otherwise would be of no force or efficacy at all.—Bp. BEVERIDGE, *Sermons on the Christian Ministry*, Vol. I. p. 24.

assembly of the Apostles. WITHOUT THESE THERE IS NO CHURCH.”¹

Thus much respecting the Church, and our obligations consequent thereupon, must suffice for the present. I am sensible that it is imperfect, and that the argument is but partially developed; still I trust that what I have said may, at least, lead to further examination and inquiry concerning the truth in its integrity, and where alone it is to be found.—Let us proceed to the consideration of the next point proposed for brief remark.

II. THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE LITURGY.

The Liturgy of our branch of the Church is contained in the Book of Common Prayer. It is composed of a great variety of matter; such as Daily Morning and Evening Prayer; the Litany; special Prayers and Thanksgivings; the Collects; Epistles, and Gospels, for the Sundays and Holy Days throughout the year; the Holy Communion and Baptismal Offices; the Catechism; the Order of Confirmation; the Marriage and Burial Services; Occasional Offices; the Psalter; Articles of Religion; Ordination Offices; Consecration of a Church; and the Institution of Ministers, &c. Some portions of the Liturgy are for constant, daily use; others are appropriated to the Sundays and Holy Days; others, again, to particular occasions for ministerial action, as they may arise: all, however, in their place and due proportion, minister to the

1) ST. IGNATIUS, BISHOP AND MARTYR, *Epistle to the Trallians*, § 3.

“edifying of the body of Christ,” by “rightly dividing the Word of truth,” “according to the analogy of faith;”¹ that is, by teaching, explaining, enforcing wholesome and godly doctrine and discipline. The great *value of the Liturgy*, then, consists in this, that it is the declared sense of the Church, as to what Holy Scripture teaches and requires; it is the enunciation, on her part, of “our most holy faith;” it is what she, acting in her capacity as the Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ, sets forth as the interpretation of God’s Word. To us, it is, indeed, the sum and substance of the teaching of the Divine Scriptures. To us it comes, as embodying the united wisdom, and learning, and piety of the Church in all ages of her purity; and to us it is, in every case, the guide to whom we may resort with entire confidence, and by whose help we may, without fear, draw water out of the wells of salvation. Yes, the prayers and praises which the Church puts into our mouths, the Creeds which she requires us steadfastly to profess and maintain, the holy sacramental offices in which she calls upon us to join, the solemn seasons of sacred festivity and penitential sorrow and humiliation which she expects us duly to observe; all these, and whatever else is enjoined, are expressive of what the Spouse of Christ understands by “the truth as it is in Jesus;” all plainly show what is the faith into which we have been baptized and taught, what is the faith in which we are professedly living, and on which our hopes of eternal salvation through Christ are based.

1) 2 Tim. ii. 15; Rom. xii. 6.

These things being so, the *importance of the Liturgy* is at once seen. It serves not only to promote good order and decency in the public worship of Almighty God ; it tends not only to prevent all irreverent, light, or unseemly expressions, all appeals to mere feeling or passion, all sudden excitement or enthusiasm ; but it also effectually provides against corruption of the faith, by the unsoundness, ignorance, or carelessness of the ministry : I mean, that the Liturgy of the Church gives no opportunity for any one, if so disposed, to lead the people astray, by putting in their mouths, or offering up in their stead, heretical or blasphemous prayers and invocations, or by insidiously omitting the distinct and constant recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier. Though an unfaithful or ignorant priest may, by his *preaching*, delude unstable souls ; though it is possible that he may seek to propagate heresy or schism ; yet it is almost impossible for him so to do, to any effect, among those who have become habituated to the use of the Liturgy ; it may be regarded as sure and certain that he will not succeed, while the public Daily Morning and Evening Prayers are condemning him out of his own mouth, while the Catechism is taught, and while the Services of the Church are, one and all, speaking entirely opposite language. Nor is it only in this light that the Liturgy is important and valuable ; for inasmuch as it is almost entirely composed of Holy Scripture, its manifest tendency is to promote a love and reverence for that Sacred Volume. God the Holy Ghost having inspired it, and caused it to be written for our learning,

all that is contained in it is pure, unmixed, unchangeable, ETERNAL TRUTH. God's holy Word can never fail: it can never alter: it is always, every where, and at all times, the same; and it stands sure for ever and ever. We cannot, therefore, study and meditate upon its blessed contents too often. We cannot pray to be guided into a right understanding of it too frequently or too earnestly. We cannot know too well, or love too much, that which rightly comprehended and received, is able to make us wise unto salvation. As the Daily Services of the Church require large portions of Holy Scripture to be read distinctly in the ears of the people, and as the whole Liturgy is full of the message of the Lord of Hosts; so it cannot but happen that the knowledge of Divine truth will be increased: so, too, it will be seen that a love for the study of the Word of God will be fostered, and a desire to grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ will be encouraged. If the Liturgy be faithfully used and duly regarded, there will be prevalent none of the evils which spring out of the unlicensed exercise of private judgment; there will be no disposition to be puffed up in mind, and little or no liability to be deceived by the plausible but false maxim, that every man is competent of himself to discover what he must do to be saved. While we are taught, and while we ever hold fast to it as certainly true, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation," we know full well that few, if any, alone and unaided, are able to read aright the manifold wisdom and compassion of God, as manifested in and through our Lord Jesus Christ: and we are sure that Christ's holy Church is

“the pillar and ground of the truth ;” “by the Church is made known the manifold wisdom of God ;” to the “body of Christ” were the promises made by the Great Head of the Church ; and against it “the gates of hell shall never prevail.”¹ The Word of God, then, as read and understood in the Church of God, affords the only true and certain way of arriving at a due knowledge of our duty and our great privileges. Hence, the faith of Christ and the Church of Christ can never be separated. “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”²

In pursuance of the plan marked out for this Introduction, it becomes necessary to pass, for the present, from these interesting topics, and to enter upon the consideration of the last point to which our attention is at this time invited. Bear with me, then, while I endeavor to give,

III. BRIEF NOTICES OF THE FESTIVALS AND FASTS, AND HOLY SEASONS.

“It is the peculiar computation of the Church to begin her year, and to renew the annual course of her service, at the time of *Advent*, therein differing from all other accounts of time whatsoever. The reason of which is, because she

1) 1 Tim. iii. 15 ; Eph. iii. 10 ; Matt. xvi. 18 ; 1 Cor. xii.

2) Magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est. Hoc est enim vere proprièque catholicum.

“We must take especial care to hold and maintain that which every where, always, and by all has been believed ; for this is truly and properly the Catholic faith.”—VINCENT. LERIN. *adv. Hæres.* c. 3.

does not number her days, or measure her seasons, so much by the motion of the sun, as by the course of our Saviour; beginning and counting on her year with Him, who, being the true SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, began now to rise upon the world, and, as *the Day Star on high*, to enlighten them that sat in spiritual darkness.”¹ In order to promote edification, the ecclesiastical year is divided into *two parts*: the first extends from Advent to Trinity-Sunday; the second comprises the period between Trinity-Sunday and the following Advent. The design of the *former* portion of the year is to commemorate Christ’s living among us. Beginning with the grand and momentous truth that “the Word was made flesh,” that “Christ Jesus came into the world,” we celebrate, in order, the Nativity of the Redeemer; His Circumcision, and Manifestation to the Gentiles; His doctrine and miracles; His baptism, fasting, and temptation; His agony and bloody sweat; His cross and passion; His precious death and burial; His glorious resurrection and ascension; and His sending the Holy Ghost as our Comforter. The Epistles and Gospels, during this portion of the year, point us directly to the office and agency of the adorable Trinity, in the wondrous plan of human redemption; and show us what the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have done in order to rescue us from death and misery, and make us heirs of everlasting life. The design of the *latter* portion of the year of the Church, is to teach us to live after the example of Christ our Saviour. For this purpose, the practi-

1) REV. CHARLES WHEATLEY, *On Common Prayer*, p. 219.

cal duties of the Gospel are brought prominently forward in the Epistles and Gospels for the Sundays after Trinity. Having already learned the mysteries of our religion, and what is the faith into which we were baptized, we are now taught what we are to practice, and what we are to do, in order to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.—With these brief remarks, as to the intention of the Church in general in her arrangements, let us take up, in order, and briefly notice, the various Festivals and Fasts, as they occur.

ADVENT. The season of Advent commences, sometimes as early as the 27th of November, and never later than the 3d of December. There are four Sundays in Advent, which are intended as preparatory to the great Festival of the Nativity. To this end, the coming of Christ in the flesh, in great humility, to work out our redemption, is distinctly and fully set forth; together with the solemn warning, that He will come again, in power and great glory, to judge the world. Our minds being duly solemnized, and our thoughts made to dwell upon this glorious theme, we are meetly prepared to welcome in, and devoutly celebrate, the glorious Festival of our Lord's Nativity.

CHRISTMAS DAY. December 25th has been appointed by the Church, though very probably it is not the true date of our Saviour's birth. The end, however, for which the Festival was instituted is answered equally well, by observing this day, as the Church has prescribed. This Festival is of great antiquity, and may be regarded as of primitive insti-

tution. The first Lessons for the day contain the clearest prophecies of Christ's coming in the flesh. The second Lessons, and the Epistle and Gospel, show us the completion of those prophecies, by giving us the entire history of His birth. The Collect teaches us to pray that we may be partakers of the benefits arising out of His incarnation ; and the proper Psalms employ us in praising and glorifying God for this incomprehensible mystery. The Epistle and Gospel for the day, were used in the most ancient Liturgies.

THE CIRCUMCISION, January 1st. This Festival commemorates the circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, after eight days were accomplished, subjected Himself to this rite of initiation into the Jewish Church. The Lessons and Epistle for the day, give us an account of the institution of circumcision ; and show us, that though the circumcision of the flesh is abrogated, God still requires the circumcision of the heart. The Gospel records the circumcision of our Saviour, and the divine and sacred name that was then given Him.

THE EPIPHANY, January 6th. On this day the Church calls upon us to commemorate *the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles*, He having broken down the middle wall of partition, and commanded His Gospel to be preached to every creature, instead of being confined (as formerly) to the Jews. The services appointed, are intended to show us that, according to the prophecies, which cannot fail, the Church is to have abundant increase and glory in the latter

days: we are also told of the manifestation of the Redeemer to the wise men of the East; and of our Lord's showing forth His divine power, by the first miracle which He wrought at Cana of Galilee.

The Sundays after Epiphany. There are six appointed, all of which, however, are not used, unless Easter falls very late; i. e. as late as April 22d. When Easter comes as early as the 24th of March, there is only one Sunday after Epiphany. Our Lord's *Humanity* having been set forth in the services from Christmas to Epiphany, our attention is now directed to the displays of His *Divinity*; and we are urged, in the Epistles, to walk in the footsteps of His most holy life.

Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima Sundays. As the first Sunday in Lent is called Quadrigesima, being the *fortieth day before Easter*, the three preceding Sundays have been termed, from the next round numbers, *Quinquagesima*, fiftieth; *Sexagesima*, sixtieth; and *Septuagesima*, seventieth day before Easter. The design of the Church is apparent, in the services appointed for these Sundays. She calls us from the feasting and joy of Christmas, to prepare for fasting and humiliation. She bids us think upon the *cause* which required the incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God, viz. our sins, and our self-induced ruin; and she expects us in this way to realize the necessity of humbling ourselves to the dust before God. The Epistles and Gospels are chosen with special reference to this end.

THE FORTY DAYS OF LENT. This is the great and solemn season of fasting, humiliation, and prayer; during which we are called upon and urged, by the most moving considerations, to chasten ourselves by abstinence, by prayer, by retiring as much as may be from the bustle and excitement of the world, by refraining from pleasures, and even allowable enjoyments of this life; by devout reading of God's holy Word, and by gladly waiting upon Him in His sanctuary. If we desire to emulate in love and good works the primitive Christians, we cannot do less; for they far surpassed in strictness this lax and lukewarm age. They extended their fasting every day in Lent beyond three in the afternoon; no marriages were allowed; and they exhibited every external mark of deep penitence and sorrow. Happy would it be for the Church now, did her children seek, more than they do, to grow in grace, by a due and proper observance of this solemn season!

ASH-WEDNESDAY, or the first day of Lent. "All Sundays in the year" being Festivals, they do not, of course, admit of being kept as Fasts. Now, as there are six Sundays in Lent, it was thought necessary to deduct them from the six weeks of fasting, leaving only thirty-six days to be devoted to this purpose; hence, four days from the week preceding are added, in order to complete the number of forty; which makes Wednesday the first day of Lent. It is called Ash-Wednesday, from the custom in the primitive Church, of putting on, or lying in *sackcloth* and *ashes*, in order to indicate deep humiliation and penitence. On this

day, too, those persons convicted of crimes were put to open penance; being excommunicated by the Bishop, and not restored until after the most public testimonies of sorrow and repentance, and every mark of unfeigned humiliation. The Church of England, in consequence of the want of the godly discipline of the Primitive Church, (the restoration of which "is much to be wished,") has appointed a service to be used on Ash-Wednesday, entitled, "A Commination, or Denouncing of God's Anger and Judgments against Sinners." The Church in America omitted this service in her revision of the Book of Common Prayer, with the exception of incorporating the last three prayers in it with the regular Ash-Wednesday services. The Lessons for the day point out the depravity of mankind, and the only way of salvation through a Redeemer; urge us to the acquisition of Christian graces and virtues; encourage us to repentance, by declaring God's mercy to the Ninevites; and enforce this same duty, by setting forth the second coming of Christ to judge the world. The Epistle and Gospel warn us against resting in external expressions of sorrow, while our hearts are untouched, and devoid of the emotions of real contrition.

Of the Sundays in Lent. These, though not Fast Days, have services appointed, which are very appropriate to the season during which they occur. Mortification of our wicked passions; self-abasement; humility; the all-purifying, all-sufficient efficacy of Christ's blood; His infinite condescension; His divine compassion and power, as manifested in the miracles which He wrought; these, and such like, are the topics on which the Lessons, and Epistles, and Gospels.

dwell ; and these are the subjects presented to us for devout meditation.

Passion Week. This is so called, because it is particularly devoted to the commemoration of the passion, or suffering, and death of our Saviour. It is sometimes termed the *Great Week*, on account of the great and wonderful transactions which then took place, and the inestimable benefits and blessings which we hence derive : or again, it has been called the *Holy Week*, in consequence of the extraordinary and solemn exercises of devotion which the Church prescribes in it. By the primitive Christians it was observed with very great strictness. They gave themselves not only to increased fasting and humiliation, but also to greater watchfulness unto prayer, public and private, to hearing and reading Holy Scripture, and to a most solemn repentance for those sins which occasioned our Lord's sufferings and agony on the cross. During every day of this week, the Church calls us to the contemplation of the Redeemer's sufferings in our behalf ; these are recited in the Lessons, Epistles, and Gospels, in order to deepen our humiliation, to increase our abhorrence for sin, and to fill our hearts with such unfeigned sorrow for our grievous transgressions, that we shall resolve, and strive in the Holy Ghost, to flee from sin utterly, and to go forward in holiness day by day. God grant that such may be the blessed effects of this holy week !

GOOD-FRIDAY. This day is so called, because of the incalculable and exalted *good* which we derive from the suf-

ferings of Christ; who, "by the shedding of His own blood, obtained eternal redemption for us." From the very first age of Christianity, Good-Friday has been observed with the strictest fasting and humiliation; and will so be observed by all who have any thing of an adequate perception of what is commemorated on it. Surely, the ingratitude and insensibility of Christians can in no way be more glaringly exhibited, than in permitting this holy day to pass as an ordinary day; in the usual pursuits of business or of pleasure, and with scarcely a thought of the sins and guilt which were at this time expiated on the cross!—As respects the services appointed, they are peculiarly appropriate to the occasion. The proper Psalms contain propheticall allusions to the sufferings and death of Christ. The Lessons for the morning, give us an account of the offering up of Isaac, that striking type of the oblation made this day by the Son of God; and tell us of the betrayal of Christ, and His trial before Pilate. The Lessons for the evening, contain a clear and striking prophecy of the passion of Christ, and of the benefits derived to the Church thereby; and also an affecting exhortation to humility and unity, based upon the perfect example of our Lord and Saviour. The Epistle sets forth the *typical* nature of the Jewish sacrifices, and the perfect completeness and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. The Gospel is taken out of St. John, because he was the only one who was present at the passion, and stood by the cross when the others fled. May we never be ashamed of, and never lay down the cross of our Redeemer!

Easter-Even. The Church, on this occasion, commem-

orates the descent of Christ into hell ; that is, the state in which He was between the time of His death and His resurrection ; for He not only died and was buried, but (as says our Article,) “He went down into hell,” by which is meant that he went into the place of departed spirits. The Lessons, Epistle, and Gospel, for Easter-Even, call us to consider the glorious consequences of our Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection.

EASTER-DAY.¹ This is the great Festival of the year, and has been observed by the Church since the very days of the Apostles themselves. Bright and glorious Easter ! Happy shall we be, if we die unto sin, and rise again unto holiness ; happy shall we be, if we “walk in newness of life !”—The proper Psalms for the morning’s service, are the 2d, 57th, and 111th. The second Psalm speaks of the Messiah, inaugurated into His regal and sacerdotal office, after He had been persecuted and crucified. The fifty-seventh Psalm celebrates our Lord’s triumph over death and the grave ; and the one hundred and eleventh is a psalm of thanksgiving, for the marvellous works of redemption. The proper Psalms for the evening service, are the 113th, 114th, and 118th. These declare the providence of God ; recite the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, which is typical

1) Easter being the day on which all the moveable Feasts and Holy Days depend, it may be well to notice the rule for determining when it occurs : it is always the first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon or next after the 21st day of March ; and if the full moon happen upon a Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday after. Hence, Easter may come as early as the 22d of March, or as late as the 25th of April.

of our deliverance from death and hell ; and point to our Saviour's resurrection, as prefigured by the psalm of praise composed by David, after the ark was brought to Jerusalem. The first Lessons contain an account of the Passover, and the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt ; the one prefiguring Christ, our Passover, and the other our deliverance from the dominion of death and hell. The second Lessons, and the Gospel and Epistle, give us full evidence of Christ's resurrection, and show us the use we should make of it.

Monday and Tuesday in Easter Week. The services appointed for these days, are intended to confirm and settle our faith in the fundamental article of that Creed, the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Of the Sundays after Easter. These relate to the Resurrection of Christ, and the promise of the Comforter. Hence, we are exhorted to seek diligently for the holy graces and excellences of the Christian life, that we may have good ground to hope for the glorious rewards which Christ, by His resurrection, has assured to His faithful servants.

THE ASCENSION DAY. Our Lord and Master was seen of His disciples during forty days after His resurrection, at the expiration of which period, He was taken up from them into heaven, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. "Holy Thursday," or the Festival of the Ascension, has services appointed of a very glowing and cheering character. The Proper Psalms engage us in magnifying and praising God ; in adoring the Messiah ascending "the holy hill," the highest heavens, of which Mount Zion was a type :

in celebrating the glory and stability of our Lord's kingdom, and His triumph over his enemies; and in giving thanks for the love and mercy of God to mankind. The Lessons contain the account of Elijah's being taken up into heaven, and conferring a double portion of his spirit upon Elisha, which may be regarded as prefiguring our Lord's ascension, and sending down of the Holy Ghost upon His Apostles and disciples; the ascent of Moses into the mount, to receive the law from God; the exalted and glorious design of our Lord's ascension, even the establishment and perfection of His Church, &c. The Epistle and Gospel warn us to prepare ourselves against the second coming of our Saviour; tell us of His last discourse to His disciples; His reception into heaven, etc.

WHITSUNDAY. This great Festival (answering to the Pentecost among the Jews) was so called, either because of the *light* which this day was communicated to the Apostles, whereby they became "lights to lighten the world;" or because, being one of the two principal seasons of Baptism in primitive times, the baptized persons wore *white* garments, in token of the *purity* and *innocence* of life to which Christians have bound themselves. On this holy day we commemorate the gift of the Holy Ghost, who visibly descended on the Apostles, as related in the second chapter of the Acts. In the proper Psalms our thoughts are elevated, and our tongues caused to break forth into joy and adoration, because of the glorious things which God hath done for us. The first Morning Lesson contains an account of the

appointment of the *Jewish* Pentecost, which was a type of the *Christian* Pentecost; the first Evening Lesson recites a striking prophecy of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, the conversion of the Gentiles, &c. The second Lessons tell us of the accomplishment of this prophecy, in the miraculous cures which were wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost; and of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Christian converts. The Epistle and Gospel record our Lord's promise of sending the Comforter, and relate His miraculous descent.

Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun-Week. These days are appointed to wait upon the great Pentecostal Feast, for much the same purpose as those noticed before in connection with Easter. The appointed services will be found aptly to minister to the end intended, which is to teach and inform us of the gracious doings of God in our behalf, and to fill us with gratitude and joy.

TRINITY SUNDAY. The appointment of this day for the distinct and solemn declaration of our faith in the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead, was in great measure rendered necessary in consequence of the Arian, and other heresies of a like character, which so greatly disturbed the peace of the Church, and sought to destroy the purity and integrity of the Gospel. The choice of this particular day is very happy; for our Lord having taken our nature upon Him, suffered, died, rose again, and ascended into heaven; and the Holy Ghost having been sent down upon the disciples, there ensued the full revelation of the glorious and

incomprehensible doctrine of the Trinity. The Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, Ascension, and Descent of the Holy Ghost, all having been celebrated; all having, in their place, pointed us to the Divine Persons as concerned in the wondrous plan for human redemption; we are taught to sum up all with a Festival devoted especially to the glory and honor of the ever adorable and triune JEHOVAH. The services of the day will be found to set forth the doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead.

The Sundays after Trinity. The design of the Church in the portion of the year between Trinity Sunday and Advent, has already been alluded to (p. xxxi). As she intends to instruct us in the duties of Christianity, such passages out of the Evangelists are selected for the Gospels as are calculated to advance us in the graces and virtues of the Christian life. The Epistles tend to the same desirable end.

In addition to the Festivals and Fasts here noted, it may be proper briefly to mention those which have been omitted. Our portion of the Church has appointed certain days to be observed in commemoration of St. John the Baptist, the Apostles, Evangelists, the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Innocents, St. Stephen the Proto-Martyr, St. Michael, and All Angels, and finally, All Saints. Beside the great Fast of Lent, there are appointed the *Ember Days* at the four seasons, being the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the first Sunday in Lent; after the Feast of Pentecost; after September 14th; and after December 13th. The three *Roga-*

tion Days, being the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Holy Thursday, or the Ascension of our Lord ; and *all the Fridays in the year*, except Christmas Day ; are also among the Fasts appointed by the American branch of the Church Catholic.

Having thus briefly spoken of a few things which seemed to require notice in order to complete the design of the present volume, I must beg affectionately to commend the study of the Liturgy, and its manifold beauties and excellences, as (next to Holy Scripture) most interesting and deeply important in reference to our eternal well being. And that I may incite to this study, let me add strength and weight to what has already been said, by quoting the language of the learned and godly Dean Comber ; who thus speaks of the Liturgy of the Church of England :—" Though all Churches in the world have, and ever had, forms of prayer, yet none was ever blessed with so comprehensive, so exact, and so inoffensive a composure as ours : which is so judiciously contrived, that the wisest may exercise at once their knowledge and devotion ; and yet so plain, that the most ignorant may pray with understanding : so full, that nothing is omitted which is fit to be asked in public ; and so particular, that it compriseth most things which we would ask in private ; and yet so short, as not to tire any that hath true devotion : its doctrine is pure and primitive ; its ceremonies so few and innocent, that most of the Christian world agree in them ; its method is exact and natural ; its language significant and perspicuous ; most of the words

and phrases being taken out of the Holy Scriptures, and the rest are the expressions of the first and purest ages ; so that whoever takes exception at these, must quarrel with the language of the Holy Ghost, and fall out with the Church in her greatest innocence. * * * Whoever desires no more than to worship God with zeal and knowledge, spirit and truth, purity and sincerity, may do it by these devout forms. And to this end may the God of peace give us all meek hearts, quiet spirits, and devout affections ; and free us from all sloth and prejudice, that we may have full churches, frequent prayers, and fervent charity ; that, uniting in our prayers here, we may all join in His praises hereafter, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”¹

1) See WHEATLEY, *On Common Prayer*, p. 37.



It is one stratagem of the arch-enemy of mankind, (and when we know his wiles we may the better be able to defeat him,) by busying men of great and useful parts in bye matters, and things of lesser consequence, to divert them from following that *unum necessarium*, that which should be the main in all our endeavors, the beating down of sin, the planting of faith, and the reformation of manners. Controversies, I confess, are necessary, the tongues necessary, histories necessary, philosophy and the arts necessary, other knowledge of all sorts necessary in the church; for truth must be maintained, Scripture phrases opened, heresy confuted, the mouth of adversaries stopped, schisms and novelties suppressed. But when all is done, positive and practical divinity is it must bring us to heaven; that is, it must poise our judgments, settle our consciences, direct our lives, mortify our corruptions, increase our graces, strengthen our comforts, save our souls. *Hoc opus, hoc studium*: there is no study to this: none so well worth the labor as this; none that can bring so much profit to others, nor, therefore, so much glory to God, nor, therefore, so much comfort to our own hearts as this.

BP. SANDERSON.

THE CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTED
IN THE WAYS OF
THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH.

I hope none of this assembly have been deceived with the idle pretences of inward lights, or unaccountable revelations ; of arbitrary election for secret reasons, and absolute reprobation for unknown causes ; which delusions, when once entertained, would render all repentance useless. We hold fast to the old form of tradition delivered to the saints ; pretend to no revelations unknown to former ages ; to no more of the will of God than what our Lord or the Apostles have plainly delivered in Scripture. We are content to go to heaven the same way that all saints have gone before us, by the exercise of repentance and good works. Nor, if there be any truth in those sacred writings, is there any other way.—REV. HENRY WHARTON.



Advent.

SERMON I.

THE GRAND OBJECT OF OUR LORD'S ADVENT.

1 TIM. i. 15.—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

THE consoling and encouraging truth here declared, is urged upon the attention and the conscience of Timothy, St. Paul's own son in the faith, and the bishop of the church of God in Ephesus, in the very commencement of the aged Apostle's final instructions to him, and to all who should at any time be called into either of the three orders of the sacred ministry. Its importance no one can doubt who reads the Scriptures with any diligence or care; for there is hardly any doctrine so frequently reiterated—there is hardly any truth so often either announced in plain and distinct terms, or necessarily to be inferred from the language and statements of Holy Writ. And the place which this doctrine holds in this Epistle of St. Paul's, and the manner in which it is introduced, properly leads to the same conclusion respecting its momentous nature and character. Having expressed (as became the humility of the renovated man) his thankfulness to his Lord and Master, that notwithstanding his having been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, he had been counted faithful and put into the ministry

of the church, he magnifies the grace and mercy of God, as exemplified in his own case, declaring himself to be the chief of sinners; yet realizing that he had been pardoned through the atoning blood of Christ, and feeling assured that he was a ransomed sinner, and accepted in the Beloved, he is (as it were) irresistibly impelled to proclaim in the ears of Timothy, and through him unto all men, what is the foundation on which he built: yea, the love of Christ constrained him to asseverate in the strongest possible manner, the faithfulness and the worthiness of universal acceptance of this saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Very meet, therefore, is it, now that we are entering upon the holy season of Advent, to make this glorious theme the subject of our devout meditations, and to let the impressive manner and earnestness of the Apostle have their due weight in solemnizing our hearts and fixing our minds upon the good news this day uttered from this sacred place.

I. Consider who the Person is of whom the Apostle speaks in the text. "Christ Jesus," as he here calls Him, the anointed Saviour of the world, is that Being to whom our eyes are here directed, and on whom our hearts ought ever to be stayed. He is the Divine Redeemer, possessed of ineffable, incomprehensible glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the unity of the Godhead. He is the Almighty Being, who was, and is, and is to come; by whom the universe was created, and has been and is upheld; the uncaused Cause of all things; the Omniscient, Omnipresent Lord. Yet, though thus unspeakably glorious and majestic, He beheld with pity the self-induced ruin and misery of a portion of the creatures of His hand. Notwithstanding they had rebelled against Him, and embraced loathsome sin, by which they did the greatest possible dishonor to His holiness and purity, yet He loved them, and had compassion on them. It was such love as the sinful race of man cannot understand, and which the renewed soul can daily find to be deeper and deeper, and larger and larger. Wherefore He left the throne of His glory, veiling His Divinity by assuming frail humanity. He "came into the world" the incar-

nate Lord, or, as St. Paul phrases it, "God manifest in the flesh." Born of a pure virgin, the reputed son of a carpenter, He sojourned on earth many years, in poverty and obscurity, till the time came when He should declare Himself to be the Divine Messiah; then for more than three years, He proclaimed to the lost sheep of the house of Israel the good news of His coming; He went about doing good, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, raising the dead, comforting the mourner, binding up the broken hearted; patiently did He endure the opposition, the malice, the hatred, the bitter revilings and mockings of His cruel enemies; patiently did He submit to the agonies of the cross, willingly did He pour out His blood thereon, and yield up His life, to fulfil the mission on which He "came into the world." He suffered and was buried (as says the Nicene Creed), and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead. 'This was and is the Person concerning whom Moses and the prophets did write, Christ Jesus, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; the Author and Finisher of our faith, the one only foundation, being our Prophet, Priest, and King—"as a Prophet revealing unto us the whole will of God, for the salvation of man; as a Priest, having given Himself a sacrifice for sin, and so made an atonement for us; and as a King, being set down at the right hand of God, far above all principalities and powers, whereby, when He hath subdued all our enemies, He will confer actual, perfect, and eternal happiness upon us."¹

II. We are now prepared, I trust, to follow the Apostle in what he further says respecting that Divine Being who came into the world and took our nature upon Him. For what purpose did He come? "To save sinners," is the cheering answer.² Is it asked, Who are these? Will not the con-

1) Bp. PEARSON on the Creed, p. 155.

2) If we seriously consider with ourselves that wonder of all wonders, that

science of every son and daughter of the progenitors of our race reply, It is I? I am a sinner? yea, if conscience be not stifled, thus it will, it must answer; for, my brethren, never has there a man existed, save only Him who was God as well as man, who was not a sinner. A corrupt nature, inclining to evil rather than good, a depraved and rebellious heart, loving and following unrighteousness and unholiness, a perverse will, a darkened mind, a blinded understanding, all these are certain characteristics of fallen man. Unwelcome and unpalatable as this humiliating announcement is, much as it tends to lower the pride and conceit of our native dignity and excellence, still the voice of experience confirms most fully the plain and repeated declarations of Holy Writ concerning man's corruptness and wickedness. Look where we will, in what age or nation soever, among what portion of the human race we may, and the stains of sin are too visible and too deeply marked to be for a moment doubted or denied. Language cannot adequately describe the evil passions, the unholy thoughts, the blasphemous words, the horrible enormities in which men have indulged, ever since the expulsion of the guilty pair from Paradise; no words, however graphic, can give a correct representation

mystery of all mysteries, the incarnation of the Son of God, it may justly strike us into astonishment and an admiration what should be the reason and the end of it; why the Great and Glorious, the Almighty and Eternal God, should take our weak and finite nature into His infinite and incomprehensible Person; why the Creator of all things should Himself become a creature; and He that made the world be Himself made into it; why the Supreme Being of all beings, that gives essence and existence to all things in the world, whose glory the heaven of heavens is not able to contain, should clothe Himself with flesh and become a man, of the self-same nature and substance with us who live, and move, and have our being in Him! Certainly it was not upon any frivolous or ordinary account, that the Most High God manifested Himself to the sons of men in so wonderful and extraordinary a manner as this was. But He did it, questionless, upon some design that was as great and glorious as the act itself. And if we would know what His end and design in coming into the world was, the Scripture assures us in general that it was for the salvation of mankind, whose nature He assumed, "for this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And He Himself tells us, that "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," Jno. iii. 16.

BP. BEVERIDGE, "*Private Thoughts upon a Christian Life*," p. 273.

of the helplessness, and misery, and blindness, and ignorance of mankind respecting spiritual things, when left to themselves; no words can portray the extent and depth of their corruption, as sin is added to sin, and they go on filling up the measure of their iniquities: but even were this possible, it would, perhaps, be needless, for the proof lies nearer home; and as the nature of man is the same in all ages of the world, we can accurately judge from our own case, by an examination of our own hearts and lives, whether there is or ever has been a man who lives and sins not. Is there one who can honestly and conscientiously say, that his thoughts have always been pure and holy, his words at all times marked by candor and truth, his actions constantly regulated by uprightness and strict integrity? Is there one who loves and fears God always, who remembers that He is ever present, and who strives to think, speak, and do, as one who realizes that judgment and the final award are near at hand? Is there one who has never longed after the honors, and pleasures, and enjoyments of this world, who has never sanctioned or countenanced the corrupt sayings and doings of wicked men, who has never striven to lay up treasures here, where moth and rust doth corrupt, forgetful of the unfading, incorruptible treasures in heaven? But why need such questions be asked, since none, except the hypocrite or the fool, could give but one answer? All men are sinners; all have done and do evil continually; not, of course, to the same extent or in the same degree; yet all, without exception, sin and do wickedly in the sight of God:—wherefore, inasmuch as sin is the violation of God's holy law, it is plain that the penalty affixed to the law is incurred, and the punishment denounced against transgression is our due. Death being the wages of sin, death was the doom to which sin had brought us and all mankind. There was no way in which man could escape the just sentence of God; there were no means by which he could avert the anger of his Maker, or make satisfaction for the dishonor and insult cast upon the law of God. There was no ability in himself to atone for past transgressions; there was no strength which he pos-

sessed by which he could steadily and steadfastly keep God's commandments for the future ; so that, weak and miserable, sinful and wretched, death and ruin were his justly allotted portion. It was then that the arm of Omnipotence interposed to save the sinner, while He made him tremble at the utter abomination of his sin ; the Lord Jehovah determined to rescue mankind from death, to open the door of hope, to point out the path and the means to pardon and acceptance, to receive again the repentant sinner to His love and favor, and at last to exalt him to heaven and eternal felicity ; while at the same time He preserved the majesty of His law, the sacredness of His truth, the exactness of His justice. Sin was not to be regarded as any the less loathsome because it was to be pardoned, and the penitent sinner restored again ; nay, it was to be shown how entirely hateful it was and is to the perfect purity and goodness of God ; and this was done in the scheme of salvation as revealed to us in Holy Scripture. Death being the penalty, nothing short of death would meet the demands of the law ; "without shedding of blood there is no remission ;" and as no man could ransom his own soul from death, much less those of others, having nought wherewith to satisfy the requisitions of justice, it is obvious that some one must die in his stead, or he be lost for ever ; some one must incur the penalty in his place, or he never be ransomed ; some one must pour out his life's blood for man, or man obtain no reprieve ; some one, too, who has essential merit in himself, which will render his sacrifice acceptable, and maintain the dignity and the supremacy of the law. Such an one was He only who came into the world to save sinners. Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, all perfect, all holy, all glorious, humbled Himself to take our nature upon Him, and became man, that He might suffer in man's stead, and that He might die to rescue man from death and ruin : for this purpose He came, and this purpose He accomplished. As I have before said, He sojourned among men, Himself "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," proclaiming the good news of salvation, and calling men to repentance and faith. He asserted

and proved the verity and fulness of His commission as the One Mediator between God and man, by the many miracles of mercy and goodness which He performed, and by the fact that in Him alone centred and had their exact accomplishment all the prophecies concerning the Messiah since the world began; and then, when His hour was come, He offered Himself the "one sacrifice for sins." The agony and bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane, the cruel mockings and scourgings of His bitter enemies, the sharp pangs of the thorns, piercing the tender flesh, and bound in derision on His head, the intense anguish of the nails driven into His hands and His feet, the unutterable sufferings on the cross before He yielded up the ghost, when were heaped upon His head the sins and iniquities of the whole race of man;—all this the Redeemer suffered that He might save us from our sins; yea, He endured the cross, despising the shame, that He might turn away the fierce anger of the Lord Jehovah from us, that He might reconcile us unto the Father by His all-powerful intercession, and that, having made atonement for the sins of the whole world, His merits might be sufficient to save every penitent sinner who believes and obeys.¹

And so, my brethren, so in truth it is; Christ Jesus is able and willing to save unto the uttermost all who come to God by Him; He is ready to give His Holy Spirit to every one who asks for Him; He invites one and all to come and

1) What hast Thou done to save us? What is the price Thou hast laid down for our souls? O, how can it be told? What were the banishments, the oppression, the poverty to which Thou wast exposed, in comparison to the persecutions and accusations, levelled with infernal bitterness against Thy person and character? What were these persecutions and accusations to Thy agony in the garden, when, by the extreme torture of Thy thoughts, the blood was forced through Thy pores? or, what again was this to the weight of all our sins, and the wrath of Divine justice, poured at once upon Thy head? To this, death such as ours, would have been pleasure, and despair, joy. It would have been impossible for Thy human nature to have sustained this load, or withstood the violence of such a rack, had not the Divine nature upheld the human, and hardened it for the horrible encounter. * * * Was it Thou, the Wisdom, the Word, the Light, the Eternal Son of God! who, from the beginning, lay "in the bosom of the Father!" who sat with Him on the Throne of

drink of the water of life freely. Remission of sins, purification, enlightening, strength, union, and communion with Him, in and through the holy sacraments and His body, the church; these and all other things which can minister grace and comfort here, and well-grounded hope of hereafter, the Saviour freely offers, and urges upon our acceptance. Only let it be well remembered and laid to heart that Christ Jesus came into the world to save men *from*, not *in*, their sins; though His meritorious sacrifice on the cross atoned for the sins of the whole world, yet the benefits and blessings which He purchased can be of no avail to us while we continue impenitent and unrenewed. Sin must become loathsome in our eyes; we must hate it and flee from it; our hearts must be changed; our affections and desires set on heaven and heavenly things; our repentance deep and genuine; our faith unfeigned and unwavering; our obedience constant and entire. Thus and thus only shall we become meet to be profited by the atonement of Christ. Forget not this, my brethren, or ye may die in your sins, with the delusive hope of safety, while you are in fact ruined forever. The fulness and freeness of salvation gives us no liberty to sin; nay, it shows us why we ought and must hate it and forsake it utterly. Unholiness and unrighteousness of every species and degree are none the less repugnant to the laws of God—none the less odious in His eyes—none the less demanding punishment, because the Redeemer died to avert the consequences from falling on us:—O no; so far from this, the justice and holiness of the Lord are hereby confirmed and established forever; for if He spared not His only Son, but

Heaven, in unapproachable light and glory! who, with Him, received the hallelujahs of all the heavenly hosts! hallelujahs paid for their being, and that of all the worlds, the thrones, the dominions, the principalities, the powers that were created in Thee, by Thee, and for Thee! Was it Thou who came to save us from sin, and all the horrors of the pit! to make us partakers of Thy holiness and of Thy glory! And didst Thou from the highest heavens descend into this nether world and take on Thee the form of a servant (a servant not only to Thy Father but even to us), and wash our feet, and our yet more filthy souls! How infinite was Thy humility, how tender thy pity for us!—REV. PHILIP SKELTON, *Works*, Vol. III. p. 110, 111.

delivered Him up for us all—if He forgave not man except on account of the death and passion of the Divine Redeemer, what more moving, what more awful exemplification of the majesty of His law could possibly be afforded? O have we not “now all the reason that heaven or earth can afford us to tremble at His severity, even while we are within the arms of His mercy?”¹ Ye, then, who are living in sin, and hope or think that ye may be saved while in your sins, ye should take warning. Christ came indeed to save such as you, but not if ye continue such as you are. He came to save sinners, (blessed be God,) but it is not the wilful, the obstinate, the perverse, the worldly minded; these can have no claim to mercy and forgiveness, except they repent. Christ came to save the humble and the contrite, those who feel the yoke and the burden of sin to be too heavy for them to bear, who, though occasionally they may and do fall, are yet ever striving after holiness of heart and life, ever pressing onward and upward. These, weak and erring, it is true, yet penitent and believing, these Christ Jesus came to save; these He will save; but no others. Therefore, let us not be deceived. Are we impenitent and unbelieving? then know that hopeless misery in the world to come is the portion of those who go hence in such a state. Are we truly sorry for our sins? do we really believe in the atoning sacrifice of Christ as our only hope, our only ground of safety and forgiveness? and do we strive to show the sincerity of our faith by an obedient and holy walking before God? then be certain, the end of all such is peace and joy unspeakable; and since we are not our own, but are bought with a price, let us evermore glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are God's.²

1) DR. JNO. SCOTT, “*The Christian Life*,” Vol. III. p. 170, Lond. Ed. 1757.

2) 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Advent.

SERMON II.

THE NEARNESS OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 5.—“The Lord is at hand.”

THE Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament abound in solemn and explicit declarations concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. They every where point to it as the grand event, when all things shall be consummated, when the days of probation mercifully allowed to mankind shall be ended, and when the final award shall be made to every man according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil. The mode of expression, too, which our Saviour and His Apostles employ in speaking of this momentous truth, is well worthy of devout consideration: frequently is it announced not only that the Lord shall come again in power and great glory, but also that His coming is near at hand, even at the doors; that He shall come suddenly, when men do not expect Him, and that the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come upon the wicked with astonishment and horror. The same fact is declared by St. Paul in the text: “the Lord is at hand,”—the Lord is not only coming, but His coming is very nigh; therefore, let us be patient and establish our hearts, contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. It may be profitable, my brethren, at this time, when the church calls upon us to prepare for the due celebration of our Lord and Saviour’s nativity, to let our thoughts be directed to the second coming of the same Redeemer, not in the weakness and insignificance

of humanity, but in power and majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead ; and we may, by the blessing and guidance of the Holy Spirit, derive that comfort and grace to endure unto the end, which we so much need.

I. That the glorified Redeemer who now sitteth at the right hand of God, interceding for us, shall come again, is a certain and infallible truth. The same Scriptures which declare His first coming in the flesh, also declare that He shall come again with glory and might. The same Scriptures which give us an account of the days of His incarnation, of His life, miracles, discourses, prophecies, death, resurrection, and ascension, also make known unto us the solemn fact that once more, in the latter day, He shall stand upon the earth. And the Church, in her capacity as the Witness and Keeper of Holy Writ, has ever esteemed this as one of the fundamental articles of the Catholic faith. If we are assured of His first advent, if we believe the testimony of His Apostles and Evangelists, when they tell us of the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who had not where to lay His head, who went about doing good, healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, cleansing the lepers; raising the dead, and who gave Himself a ransom for us all, by pouring out His precious blood upon the cross, and by rising from the dead:—if, I say, we believe these things, and are assured that the Divine Messiah has already come, then must we also believe, then must we also be assured, that this same Messiah, our Lord and Saviour, “Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;”¹ then must we believe the words of the heavenly messengers to the eleven as the cloud received the Lord out of their sight, “ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”² I dwell upon this somewhat at large, because I most earnestly desire that the assent which I suppose every one of us will

1) 1 Thess. iv. 16.

2) Acts i. 11.

give to this truth, may not be a mere assent, but may be a real, living faith ; such a faith as works by love, and leads us to make diligent preparation against the day of our Lord's coming : and I call upon you to examine for yourselves the explicit declarations of Holy Scripture, and to lay to heart what is therein so constantly enforced. We know that that day will infallibly come ; we are as sure that it shall dawn upon the earth as though our eyes beheld it, as though this were the day of His coming ; and whatever may be the period of our Lord's second advent, whether only one day or a thousand years distant, still we are certain of the fact of His coming again whensoever it shall please Him. This truth, too, so frequently announced by the holy Apostles, forms a part of many of their most earnest exhortations ; it is frequently adduced in the way of solemn and impressive warning, and it is often urged as the basis of sound comfort and patient endurance. A great variety of expression is employed, but the substance is the same in all ; many and cogent reasons are brought forward for giving due heed to the approaching advent of our Lord, but they all have reference to the same great end ; they all point to this event as that which shall consummate every thing ; and the sacred penmen distinctly and fully make known unto us the inseparable connection between the second coming and the final judgment, when the righteous shall receive according to their righteousness, and the wicked be punished according to their wickedness ; when, too, there shall be an eternal separation between the good and the evil, between those who have served God, and those who have served Him not.

II. The second advent of our Lord being thus certain and momentous in its object, it may not be unedifying to inquire, with proper humility, into the meaning of the many declarations, similar to that in the text, which imply evidently the near approach of the day of His coming. "The Lord is at hand," says St. Paul to the Philippians ; and to the Hebrews he says, "the day is approaching,"¹—

1) Heb. x. 25.

“The coming of the Lord draweth nigh; behold the Judge standeth before the door,” is the express testimony of St. James;¹ and St. Peter asserts positively that “the end of all things is at hand.”² Now, at first view, it would seem that the Apostles, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, regarded the day of Christ’s coming as literally very near at hand, so near as that perhaps some of themselves and many of that generation should be alive to witness it; and it is certain that most of their expressions on this subject appear to imply that they were persuaded that the Lord would speedily come to judge both the quick and the dead; we know, moreover, that their language was so understood by some if not many in their own day; but notwithstanding all this, we have St. Paul’s explicit denial that such is the true meaning of his words, and also his reasons why the day of judgment was not so near at hand as many had supposed. In the second chapter of his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, he speaks directly to this point:—“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, (of which he had written to them in his first Epistle,) that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, (i. e. by any pretended revelation,) nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”—of which corruption of the faith (as exemplified by the church of Rome) he goes on to speak at large. We are obliged, therefore, to understand what is said in the New Testament of the nearness of the day of judgment with some considerable latitude; and we must be cautious how we endeavor to fix with any tolerable appearance of precision the exact time of our Lord’s second advent;³ especially when we call to mind what He Himself has said respecting this matter; “of

1) James v. 8, 9.

2) 1 Pet. iv. 7.

3) There seems to have been a sect in the Apostolic age; in which sect, however, the Apostles themselves were not, as some have absurdly maintained,

that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. * * Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”¹ “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.”² Dismissing, then, every attempt to determine upon the precise period of that day and that hour which the Saviour so positively declares neither man nor angel knows, and feeling as we must that all such attempts are vain and unprofitable, let us rather seek for edification in seeing how all the revelations of God’s holy Word concerning the approaching judgment may and ought to affect our hearts and consciences. “The Lord is at hand,” indeed, to each and every living man among us; it is possible that His coming in power and great glory to judge the world may be only a little way off; it is possible, nay, perhaps, more probable, that ages may intervene between our day and the final consummation of all things; but however this may be, it does not specially concern us, and as the Scriptures have given us no light on the subject of the exact period, we should only grope in darkness and uncertainty to endeavor to find it out. The Holy Spirit has determined that it is enough for us to be assured of the *certainty* of the second coming of Christ to judge both the quick and the dead, and, being assured of this, it is a matter of comparatively little importance to us when that day may arrive; if we are prepared against that day, it is sufficient, let it come whensoever it shall please God. If we are not prepared, it will not help us to feel that it may possibly come in our life-time;—I say,

included; but there seems to have been a sect which looked for the resurrection in their own time. Some of these persons seem to have taken advantage of St. Paul’s expressions (1 Thess. iv.) to represent him as favoring their opinions. This occasioned the second epistle to the Thessalonians, in which the Apostle peremptorily decides against that doctrine; maintaining that the Man of Sin is to be revealed, and a long consequence of events to run out, before the day of judgment can come; and he desires that no expression of his may be understood of its speedy arrival; which proves that the coming mentioned in his former epistle is the coming to judgment, and that whatever he had said of the day of coming as at hand, was to be understood only of the certainty of that coming.—*Dr. HORSLEY’S Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 12.

1) Matt. xxiv. 36, 42.

2) Acts i. 7.

it will not help us, because, if the prospect of death certainly coming upon us within a few years do not move us to penitence, faith, and obedience, the further prospect of the approaching judgment day will be of little weight. If we prepare not for death, knowing that we must soon die, and that then our day of grace will be ended, we shall hardly think of preparing for what will succeed death. From such solemn considerations as these, we may learn the sense in which it is strictly true that "the Lord is at hand." His coming, my brethren, draweth nigh to each one of us, not simply by the lapse of time which shall ere long be no more, but rather in the ways of His Providence, in the repeated calls to penitence and faith, in the manifold warnings of how frail and uncertain our life here is, and in the earnest pleadings with us by His Word and His Church to remember that now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, and that the night cometh when no man can work. In these and many similar ways may it be truly said, that "the Lord is at hand," but more especially in the near and sure approach of death. While the Lord Jesus gives us many tokens of His coming, while He warns us to prepare for that great and terrible day by constant watchfulness and prayer, He bids us be always ready, to be up and doing, "lest coming suddenly, He find us sleeping."¹ He commands His ministering servants to lift up their voices in warning and exhortation, to call upon men to give good heed to the dispensations of Divine Providence, for they are sent in mercy, and to teach them to look upon sickness and sorrow, trials and misfortunes, loss of friends and relatives, as so many clear indications of our Lord's coming being near at hand; and

- 1) "Think not of rest; tho' dreams be sweet,
Start up and ply your heavenward feet.
Is not God's oath upon your head,
Ne'er to sink back on slothful bed,
" Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,
Ye hear your Master's midnight call!"

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*, p. 24.

particularly is it His command that men be continually reminded that "in such an hour as they think not, the Son of man cometh;"¹ yea, in such an hour as they think not, it is appointed unto them to die; and that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither they are going;"² but that nothing follows death except the judgment, the final award of eternal happiness or eternal misery. Death is to us and to all, the same in effect with the coming of our Lord to judge the world, because death puts an end to the period of our probation; death cuts us off from this world, and determines at once and for ever our condition in the eternal world.³ We may therefore take warning from the Apostle's announcement to his Philippian brethren. The Lord was at hand to them; He came to them by His messenger, Death; He called them away from this world of trial and trouble to give an account of their stewardship. Thus has He done in all preceding ages; thus is He doing now. In a few days or years He will come to us in the same manner; He will cease knocking at the door of our hearts; He will cease calling upon us to abhor that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good; He will no longer plead with us by His Holy Spirit to take up the cross and follow Him;—no, but He will say to us those words of terror to the impenitent and the unbelieving, "this night shall thy soul be required of thee;" this night will I come suddenly while thou art sleeping, and while thy lamp

1) Matt. xxiv. 44.

2) Eccl. ix. 10.

3) The Spirit of God means to awaken us from delusion, when He tells us, by the Apostles and holy men of old, that the "coming of the Lord draweth nigh." He means, by these declarations, to remind every man that his particular doom is near; for whatever may be the season appointed in the secret counsels of God, for "that great and terrible day, when the heavens and the earth shall flee from the face of Him who shall be seated on the throne, and their place shall be no more found"—whatever may be the destined time of this public catastrophe, the end of the world, with respect to every individual, takes place at the conclusion of his own life. In the grave there will be no repentance; no virtues can be acquired; no evil habits thrown off. With that character, whether of virtue or vice, with which a man leaves the world, with that he must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. In that moment, therefore, in which his present life ends, every man's future condition becomes irreversibly determined—*BP. HORSLEY'S Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 160.

is not trimmed, and thy light gone out. Yes, the Lord is at hand to the righteous as well as the wicked: He will soon release them from the bitter persecutions and fierce assaults of our great adversary; He will ere long take them out of this world of sin and corruption; and that messenger which is so horrible to the mass of men, shall have no terrors for those who have fought the good fight, who have kept the faith; no distressing fears, no agonizing regrets, shall then disturb or harass; but they will recognize the hand of their Master; they will know that He is near by; He is supporting, He is comforting, He is strengthening them; and they will sleep in Him, awaiting the resurrection of the last day, and the perfect bliss which they shall then receive in body and soul.

My brethren, it is but meet and proper that we who are at this time permitted to rejoice in the near approach of the festal day of our blessed Lord's nativity, should remember always that the day of His triumph is at hand, and that the day when He shall sit on His throne and judge every individual who has ever lived, or shall ever live upon the earth, is now not far distant. Are our hearts filled with joy because He came in the flesh; because He took our nature upon Him and suffered in our stead upon the cross? and are we prepared or making preparations to celebrate that day with an holy joy, with cheerfulness and thanksgiving? O, if we are, let us never forget that there is another day fast drawing on, another day of unspeakable moment to every soul of man, another day which every eye shall see, and every son and daughter of Adam and Eve shall behold. If our hearts are joyous because our Redeemer once came and dwelt among men, shall we not also be joyous because He comes again? It is our privilege to rejoice and be glad because the Sun of righteousness has arisen with healing in His wings, and we pray God to accept our hearty thanks, our continual praises for this His unspeakably precious gift. Shall we not also strive that in the last day, the day of His second advent, we may joy and praise Him for ever? I would it were possible for me to give utterance to the high

and holy hopes which are herein held out for our acceptance: I would, too, it were possible for me to give expression to the forcible warning which it is my duty again to urge upon you. The Lord has come suddenly and stricken down one¹ who only five days ago was in the enjoyment of health, and actively engaged in the duties of his profession. Unexpected, startling was the coming of the Lord to him; grievous, heavy, and full of bitterness is the dispensation to his wife and orphan children. O what a solemn warning to us, my brethren; O what a voice comes from the grave to us, "be ye also ready." Ye men in the prime of manhood, in the full enjoyment of health and strength, in the confidence of living many days, come here and look into the narrow house appointed for all the living. How know ye but that in one short week ye too shall lie down in the dust? How know ye but that in less than this the Lord will come suddenly unto you and your families? Are ye prepared for this dread event, should it come thus speedily? O if ye are not, think not to put off the evil day; think not there will be a more convenient season. Be not ye foolish and slow of heart to believe! be not blind and dead to spiritual things! turn not away, I beseech you; nay, my Master beseeches you by my mouth, turn not away from Him who came and died for you once, and who is coming again to reward you according to your works; but be wise while you may, be prudent while you can; give yourselves to the worship and service of God, and He will abundantly bless you for your Saviour's sake. Yea, the day of your Lord's coming to judge the world will not, in such case, be a day of never-ending remorse and despair; it will not come upon you unawares: it will rather be a day of humble confidence, knowing in whom you have trusted, a day of peace and happiness unutterable. I can say no more than this to induce you to watch and pray without ceasing against the coming of the Lord in power and majesty; I can offer no stronger reasons than have been given

1) Alluding to the death of Jno. E. Philips, Esq., whose family were members of my parish.

why you should labor diligently that you may be "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ;"¹ and I can but pray (as indeed I do) in the words of the affectionate Apostle, St. Paul, "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ."² Pray thus for yourselves and for me, and He will hear, He will answer our prayers.

1) 1 Cor. i. 7.

2) 2 Thess. iii. 5.



Advent.

SERMON III.

THE DUTY AND THE GROUNDS OF CHRISTIAN PATIENCE.

JAMES v. 8.—“Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.”

THE concluding chapter of the Epistle of St. James is filled with exhortations to Christian patience and endurance, grounded upon the consoling thought that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. In this respect, indeed, there is a most admirable harmony between those who spake as they were moved by the same Holy Ghost, and so cheering is the accord that the diligent and faithful searcher of the Scriptures finds his faith strengthened thereby, his hopes of immortality quickened, and the light of the Saviour's presence poured in upon his soul, illumining the dark and dreary hours of his pilgrimage through this barren and thirsty land where no water is: “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand,”¹ is the language of St. Paul. “Yet a little while (says the same Apostle to the Hebrews) and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”² “Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness (is the earnest inquiry of St. Peter), looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?”³ “Little children (says the beloved disciple, not long before his departure), little children, it is the last time.”⁴ And, my brethren, if

1) Phil. iv. 5.

2) Heb. x. 37.

3) 2 Pet. iii. 11.

4) 1 John ii. 18.

Christian hearts beat in unison with these sentiments of the Apostles of our Lord, if they were willing to make the coming of the Redeemer in glory the subject of meditation and prayer, and to draw from thence lessons of warning and of comfort, there can be no doubt but that this holy season of advent, during which the Church calls upon us specially to reflect upon the coming of the Saviour in the likeness of sinful men, would be observed as a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.¹ And no tongue can tell the holy joy that would fill our hearts when the gladsome day of His nativity is come, when we would say one to another, as the wondering shepherds did, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us;" and like them we would return to our homes, "glorifying and praising God for all the things that we had heard and seen."² We should then see and feel the wisdom of the Church, and count it her highest honor in that she follows in the footsteps of the Saviour's perfect life, calling upon us and upon all to be holy even as He is holy. We should then be able to appreciate the force of those consolations which St. James holds out, and to realize that they are the only sources of true consolation and comfort under the trials and afflictions of life. Such words as these would come home to our hearts:—"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Take, my brethren, the Prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."³ Such words, I say, would be precious to those who believe; and the exhortation of the text would meet with a hearty response,—“Be ye also patient; establish your hearts:” and for this reason, “because the com-

1) Acts iii. 19.

2) Luke ii. 15, 20.

3) James v. 7, 10, 11.

ing of the Lord draweth nigh." Let us, then, as a most fitting occupation during our assembling together, consider the Apostle's address as made to us, and take home to ourselves the lessons of warning and comfort which it conveys.

Christian patience and endurance are set before us by the Apostle as our *duty*, and urged upon us by the consideration that *the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*." FIRST, we may consider *the duty*; and SECONDLY, *the reason or the grounds of it*.

I. As respects the *duty of being patient*. The patience required of the Christian is a virtue less frequently practised than perhaps any other; and were it not altogether probable that this arises from the fact of its being less understood and far less willingly acknowledged than the other virtues and graces of the Christian character, we might reasonably be surprised. But if it be remembered that our holy religion demands of all a change in heart and life, and that it binds it upon every man to become thus changed ere he can exhibit the fruits of holiness, or enter heartily upon the duties of his calling, there will be little cause to wonder at the repugnance of the natural man to this and other kindred virtues; it will rather be looked upon as one among the manifold proofs of the divine origin of Christianity. It will also be found that patience is essentially a Christian virtue, and that, combined with endurance, it forms a distinguishing excellence, which no heathen system, ancient or modern, ever knew. To a certain extent, and among a very few of the heathen sages, it is not denied patience did find a place; but it was not the patience of the Christian. The apathy or insensibility to all emotion, or the yielding to supposed inevitable fate, which were taught by many ancient philosophers, are alike contradictory to the nature and condition of man, and to the revealed will of God. The Scriptures nowhere teach us that we are to be devoid of feeling; they nowhere tell us that grief and sorrow in affliction, or joy and gladness in prosperity, are wrong or inconsistent with our duty as Christians. These feelings are a necessary part of our constitution in this probationary state, and are more or

less experienced by every man; yet though the Scriptures condemn not the natural dictates of the heart in joy, or in grief, still they require us to "let our moderation be known unto all men," and they show us the need and the value of patient endurance in all the relations of life. The renewed man finds this Christian grace to be not only a duty, but also a blessing. In trouble and affliction it shows him how to receive as he ought these evidences of our Father's chastening love; it leads him to restrain the murmurs and complaints which all are so apt to make; it disposes him to look upon the dispensations of God as merciful warnings, and as intended for his soul's good; and though the sharpness of his affliction and the bitterness of his trial may make him to cry out, and to think that never any had such grief as he has, yet patient watching unto prayer draws down from heaven larger and larger measures of the grace and strength of the Holy Ghost, so that his sorrow is alleviated, the bitter anguish of his soul is taken away, and he himself is resigned to whatever God shall please to do with him. Ah, and if he have attained to the patience of the saints, he is then like the Apostles of our Lord, who, when they had been shamefully and cruelly beaten, *rejoiced* that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ;¹ or like Paul and Silas, who, after many stripes had been laid upon them, and they thrust into a dungeon with their feet made fast in the stocks, were so determined, by the grace of God, to endure all things sooner than deny or give up the truth, that "at midnight they prayed and sang praises unto God."² And yet more; the truly faithful Christian looks at the perfect example of patient endurance which our gracious Redeemer has set. He who was emphatically "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," on whom was laid the unspeakably agonizing burden which the sins of myriads of myriads of men increased to an extent utterly beyond imagination to conceive, He who bare our sins in His own body on the tree, was ever patient, ever ready to do His Father's

1) Acts v. 40, 41

2) Acts xvi. 23-25.

will. When led as a lamb to the slaughter, He opened not His mouth ; He submitted to cruelty and indignity, to shameful injustice and bitter mockings, and at last to die the death of the cross, without a murmur or a sign of impatience ; thus becoming our all-sufficient and all-perfect example ; from which we may and ought to learn that it is not only our duty to act, but to act steadily, faithfully, patiently, and with a single eye to our Master's glory and honor. There is indeed no one, in whatever station in life, high or low, rich or poor, but what needs to be reminded of this momentous duty ; for it has to do with all conditions ; it has as much reference to our tempers and dispositions of soul as to those of the body ; it is meant to teach us how to put up with unavoidable deprivations, how to bear unexpected disappointments, or how to sustain sudden and severe losses. It is meant moreover to teach us moderation in our amusements and enjoyments, and to prevent our being over-elated with any success or prosperity. It does not tend to lead a man to be in want of genuine feelings, it does not blunt any of the finer sensibilities of our nature, and does by no means lead to moroseness or rejection of any of the innocent enjoyments of life. Far from it. It puts no restraint upon our benevolence, kind-heartedness, cheerfulness, and willingness to help others and do all the good we can ; on the contrary, if allowed to have its due and proper influence, it brings us more and more to imitate and love to follow the example which our blessed Saviour has set us ; and the more closely we approach this perfect pattern, so much the more shall we grow in grace, and increase in true holiness.

II. It being evident, then, that patience forms a Christian duty, and one which no disciple of the Lord Jesus can dispense with, let us now see the reason or the ground on which St. James in the text urges this duty upon us ; "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh : " for this reason we ought to be patient and establish our hearts. Because the Lord is coming to judgment we ought to be patient and con-

tinue in well-doing.¹ He will not leave His people much longer to struggle on amid the trials and discomforts of life. His coming in glory and majesty, in great power and might, is daily drawing nearer and nearer. Once He came in the flesh, in lowliness and exceeding great humility; once He laid aside the glories which He had with the Father before the world was, and humbled Himself to take our nature upon Him; once He veiled His Eternal Majesty in human form, and condescended to plead with His people; He came to His own, but His own received him not; He lived, He suffered, He died, all for guilty and rebellious man; and now He is at the right hand of God, our Mediator and Intercessor, our Lord and our God. Again the Saviour will come, not in the weakness and frailty of humanity, not as a man of sorrows and despised and rejected of men, but "in power and great glory; and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."²

1) If we labor in His work, we shall find the fruit of it in time. Only let us be content to stay the time, and not to be thrusting in the sickle before the corn be half ripe. The husbandman, when he hath done his work in earing and sowing, doth not look to receive the precious fruits of the earth into his garner against the next day or the next month, but he hath long patience for it; and whether it chance to be an early harvest, or a late harvest, he waiteth still and taketh the season as it falleth. Even so "have we need of patience that after we have done the will of God," and suffered according to the will of God, "we may receive the promised reward: for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." The final reward is sure; it will come at last, and not fail us: and it is so great withal, that when it cometh it will abundantly recompense all our works, yea, and our patience too. Nay, let me say, if that reward were not, nor any other world to come, yet the fruit we reap in the mean time, even in this world, from a godly life, is incomparably greater than any that the works of the flesh can yield us. Even in the judgment of heathen men, virtue ever carrieth its reward with it as being *bonum propter se expetendum*, a thing to be desired and embraced for its own worth, without respect to any further reward. And, certainly, the evenness of the mind, and vacuity from those secret lashes, those horrors and fears that haunt a guilty conscience; and the sweet comfort and complacency that a righteous soul findeth in the sincere performance of his bounden duty to God and man, in eschewing evil and doing good, is a fruit infinitely more valuable than all the pleasures and sensualities of a wicked life. How happy then is he that truly serveth God; who both hath "his fruit in holiness" onward, (that is, "the hundred-fold" in this life,) and shall in the end have "everlasting life" to boot.—BP. SANDERSON, *Sermon on Gal. v. 22, 23.*

2) Matt. xxiv. 31.

And this, His second coming, St. James tells us, draweth nigh ; it will not be long—how long neither man nor angel knows ; but yet only so long that an Apostle can assure us that it is near at hand. Is not this, then, an all-sufficient reason why we ought to be patient and establish our hearts ? could we have any more powerful ? could we have any which would sustain us better than this ? In the midst of troubles and trials, when we are weary with the burden of affliction, groaning beneath calamity and bereavement, and having no pleasure or comfort in the things which once so fully satisfied us, how strong the exhortation to patience and endurance, when we think that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh !¹ If we endure only a little while, and quit ourselves like men and like good soldiers of the Lord Jesus, He will come and release us, and then we shall have nothing more to endure ; our days of probation will be over, and eternal blessedness shall be ours. O, is not this reason enough to be patient and establish our hearts with grace ? There is no trial, no temptation, no misery, which can last long ; it must soon be over, because our days are few, our time of probation is short. If a man is disposed to repine, to murmur, to be impatient, because he cannot have every thing as he wishes it ; if he is tempted to think that the cross which he has taken up is too heavy to bear, and the strait and narrow way into which he has entered too full of thorns, let him not deceive himself, and let him take courage ; the cross is not, cannot be so heavy and grievous to him as it was to the blessed Saviour of the world ; he is not called upon to wear a crown of thorns, and submit to cruelty and ignominy,

1) To heighten the solemnity and terror (of the last day, when our Lord shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead,) the Judge will visibly descend from heaven,—the shout of the archangels and the trumpet of the Lord will thunder through the deep,—the dead will awake,—the glorified saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air ; while the wicked will in vain call upon the mountains and the rocks to cover them. Of the day and hour when these things shall be, knoweth no man ; but the day and hour for these things are fixed in the eternal Father's counsels. Our Lord will come,—He will come unlooked for, and may come sooner than we think.—*BR. HORSELEY'S Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 32.

as was his Lord, and the Apostles and martyrs. What has he, what has any man to murmur at or be impatient under, compared with those of whom St. Paul speaks? Some (he says) "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." Yet they endured all with patience, yea, even with joy; and shall any man now think that he has cause to murmur under the very light affliction which is inseparable from our fallen nature? what would he do were a martyr's death and a martyr's crown set before him?¹ True it is, there are troubles and trials enough to exercise our patience in whatever condition we may be placed: to be vexed daily with the ungodly deeds of ungodly men, and with the blasphemous sayings and conduct of those about us; to bear with the frailties, the indolence, bad habits, or bad practices of our friends and neighbors; quietly to submit to the fancies or foibles or follies of others, which we cannot help or amend; to depend on others and meet with disappointments; to have men promise and have no hesitation in breaking their promise: or to be obliged to put up with the thousand nameless vexations and troubles which continually cross our path; these and such like things are indeed enough to try our patience, and if we be not watchful unto prayer, to make us murmur and repine: but how insignificant do these appear in the eyes of the

- 1) What! wearied out with half a life?
 Scared with this smooth, unbloody strife?
 Think where thy coward hopes had flown
 Had Heaven held out the martyr's crown.

How could'st thou hang upon the cross,
 To whom a weary hour is loss?
 Or how the thorns and scourging brook,
 Who shrinkest from a scornful look!

KEBLE'S *Christian Year*, p. 150.

Christian who realizes the truth, that the advent of the Saviour is now near at hand ! He feels, he knows, that he will not have to be patient for a very long time, because the Lord will soon call him away to the mansions of peace and joy. If he be laid on the bed of sickness, if disease be rapidly making inroads upon his little strength, and he be obliged to look upon the king of terrors, still being patient and seeking God's grace to establish his heart on the Saviour, he thinks how much easier is his passage out of this world, than thousands who have gone before him ; and looking to the Saviour in faith and penitence, he patiently awaits the hour of his release ; he knows that it will soon be over, he is assured pain and anguish will soon be spent ; and then, who can tell the joy and gladness, the unspeakable exultation that will fill the redeemed soul who has gone to his eternal home, where the light of the Saviour's presence ever illumines the mansions of the blest !

—“That blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns :
Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet ;
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul !”

Be ye therefore patient ; establish your hearts ; neither murmur nor repine as though any strange thing had happened unto you ; remit not your exertions in your high and holy calling ; strive to grow in grace, to increase in the knowledge of your Lord and Saviour, and to be built up into our most holy faith ; look not at the perishable and perishing things of earth, which must soon fade away for ever ; be not soon shaken in mind, be not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by every vain and frivolous fancy or conceit of men ; but be steadfast in “the faith once delivered to the saints ;” unmovable, whether by the clamors of infidelity or the pretensions of heresy and schism, always abounding in the work of the Lord and in the gifts and graces of the Christian life. And at all times, under all circumstances, in all the

relations of life, let this solemn consideration never depart from you,—the coming of the Lord in power and great glory to judge the world draweth nigh ; yea, the Judge standeth at the door, the books are opening, eternity with its dread and majestic realities is fast coming nearer and nearer, the archangel's voice and the trump of God shall soon be heard, the Lord Himself shall ere long descend from heaven with a shout ; and though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."¹

1) Rev. xxii. 20.



Christmas.

SERMON IV.

THE AWFUL MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION.

JOHN i. 14.—“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”

It is a wise and salutary arrangement of the Church which this day calls her faithful children together, and it is in accordance with the holiest and best feelings of our nature. All ages and nations have their benefactors, whose memory they revere, and in whose honor they observe days and seasons. It is looked upon as no more than common gratitude and proper respect thus to do; and by general consent, remarkable occurrences are kept in mind, and their fame handed down, by the annual return of a day or days devoted to their commemoration. How wise and proper, then, is it for the Church to appoint a holy festal day, in which we shall rejoice because of the birth of our blessed Saviour! If it be fitting to give honor to a man like ourselves, a merely temporal benefactor, O, how much more fitting is it for us to honor the Lord of glory, Him who ransomed us from death that He might exalt us to life eternal! how joyously ought we to enter his temple gates, and come into His house upon the multitude of His mercies! how gladly ought we to exclaim, It is the Saviour's birth day—it is the day which prophets and wise men and holy servants of the Lord earnestly desired and prayed to see, and saw it not; yet our eyes are permitted to behold it—we are blessed with the privilege of offering gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—and we are blessed above all in being allowed to

worship and adore the gracious Saviour, this day born to us in the city of David! Is there a man who is unmoved while there is such cause of joy and gladness? Is there one who has been grafted into the body of Christ, and made His by adoption, who does not rejoice at each return of this holy day, on which an angel announced to the wondering shepherds on Bethlehem's plains, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people?"¹ Can there be any, naming the name of Christ, who will not gladly lift up their voices and their hearts, and with the multitude of the heavenly host, praise God and say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men?"² Nothing doubting but that such are our feelings and such our desires, I trust we are this day met together in our Master's name to meditate upon and to seek to be taught respecting the great and awful mystery of the Incarnation. Wherefore I pray you to listen and God to enable me to speak the words of His truth, that our joy may be a holy joy, and that while we cling to Him as our elder brother, we may remember that He is also our Lord and our God.

I. The Apostle St. John gives us no account of the miraculous conception and birth of the Saviour, which St. Matthew and St. Luke so fully narrate, and probably for that very reason. It was not needful again to tell the story which shows us so clearly that the Redeemer was a man; it was rather this Apostle's object, in opposition to the nascent though perhaps not fully developed heresies of his day, thoroughly to assure us that He was something *more* than

1) Luke ii. 10.

1) Oh, happy shepherds, to whom this news was sent down from heaven! Ye, to be sure, though watching in the fields, exposed to the severe cold of the night, were in this more happy than kings that slept at their ease in gilded beds, that the wonderful nativity of the Supreme King, begotten from eternity, that nativity which brought salvation to the whole world, was first communicated to you, and just at the time it happened. "Behold," says the angel, "I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day a Saviour." And immediately a great company of the heavenly host joined the angel, and in your hearing, sung "Glory to God in the highest."—ABP. LEIGH-TON'S *Works*, p. 588.

2) Luke ii. 13, 14.

man, or to prove that He was God as well as man; and this he does in the passage chosen as the text: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Now, it is plain and undeniable, that the Being here called "THE WORD" was existing before and at the time that He "was made flesh," and so could not be a *mere* man. It is plain, also, that the Word is a distinct person, and not, as the Socinians falsely and absurdly say, an attribute of the Father; for what sense would there be in saying that Wisdom or Reason was made or became flesh? Moreover, the previous verses of this chapter tell us who and what the Word was. In the beginning, (says St. John, commencing his inspired account,) in the beginning, before any thing was created, the Word was in existence; and still more, He was with God in the bosom of the Father; and yet more, He was Himself God, of the same essential Deity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. All things in heaven and in earth were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, the source and centre of life, and the life which flowed from Him was the light of men. He was the true Light, which, coming into the world, lighteth every man; and none can receive light and life from any other source. And this Being, whom the Apostle calls the Word, the only begotten Son of the Father, was made flesh, i. e. became man, and dwelt among us. From these introductory verses of this gospel, which are, as it were, a brief summary of the contents of the whole, we are most certainly taught the divinity, humanity, and office of our Lord Jesus Christ; His divinity and humanity united in one person, whereby He is both God and man, as truly God as He is man, and as truly man as He is God; "so that (in the words of our Article¹) the Godhead and manhood are joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man."

This great mystery of godliness, the incarnation of the Son of God, whereby He came and dwelt among us and fulfilled the intent of His coming, is the doctrine of every

1) Article II.

part of the New Testament. "Hereby know we the Spirit of God (says the beloved disciple in his Epistles): every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God."¹—"Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."²—"Forasmuch, then, (says St. Paul to the Hebrews,) as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same."³—"He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham."⁴—"God was manifest in the flesh."⁵—"Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, (and so truly God,) laid aside the glories of heaven and made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."⁶—"God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, and so condemned sin in the flesh."⁷ Whatever, therefore, men may say and think concerning this great and awful mystery, one thing is perfectly certain, that it is clearly taught us in Holy Scripture. The passages which have been laid before you, and very many others, will bear no other sense; and the system which seeks to pervert them from their plain signification and affix to them just whatever sense it pleases, has succeeded only so far as to make it very evident, that (if it be true) Scripture language means nothing at all when it so positively teaches the Deity, incarnation, and atonement of the Saviour:⁷ and still more, the Word of God, if used in this way, would be rendered full of unmeaning declarations, palpable contradictions, absurd and worthless reasonings, and fit only to be classed with the fabulous legends of Pagan or Mohammedan imposture! This is not said hastily or without good authority; for it is the result of considerable examination of the wicked and blasphemous tenets of those who seek to degrade the Lord and Saviour into a mere man, and who in

1) 1 Jno. iv. 2, 3.

2) 2 Jno. 7.

3) Heb. ii. 14, 16, 17.

4) 1 Tim. iii. 16.

5) Phil. ii. 6, 7.

6) Rom. viii. 3.

7) See ABP. MAGEE *On the Atonement*, Vol. II. pp. 209, 221, &c.

proportion as they rob Him of His glory, and sink Him to the level of frail and fallible man, exalt themselves and become puffed up with an idea of their own powers and abilities, and of their entire sufficiency to do any thing and every thing.¹ They have but *to resolve* (as they think) and they are fully competent *to do*;² they have but to *determine* that they will repent and believe, and all is perfectly easy, and God will accept them on this consideration alone; as if repentance, or sorrow for wicked actions, had in it any merit to recommend us to God, or could in any way satisfy the demands of justice for the violations of His law. In opposition to all such unchristian sentiments, let us hold fast to the catholic doctrine of the incarnation, as taught in the text and by the Church in all ages. It is a high, it is an awful mystery, undoubtedly, but none the less true on that account. It may be and is beyond the reach of our comprehension, but not any more so than the very first principle of all religion, viz., the existence and attributes of God.³ The objections which are and

1) Archbishop Magee, in his masterly work on the Atonement, quotes from Mr. Belsham, a *dux gregis* among the modern Unitarians, a passage which may not improperly be here introduced in verification of the statement made above. Addressing a "person oppressed by the tyranny of evil habits," Mr. B. says: "You are deficient in virtuous habits; you wish to form them; you have contracted vicious affections; you wish to exterminate them. You know the circumstances in which your vicious habits were originally contracted, and by which they have been confirmed. Avoid these circumstances, and give the mind a contrary bias. You know what impression will produce justice, benevolence, &c.—Expose your mind repeatedly and perseveringly to the influence of these impressions, and the affections will gradually rise, and insensibly improve, &c.—ALL that is required is judgment, resolution, time, and perseverance!"—On the Atonement, Vol. II. p. 120–122, &c.

2) See CHANNING'S *Discourses*, pp. 211, 241, 278, &c.

3) Our feeble powers cannot comprehend the mysterious union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ. Neither can we comprehend the infinite and eternal essence of God, or the mysterious tie that connects together in one person the soul and body. If, therefore, we reject the mystery of the incarnation, because it is incomprehensible, we must also reject the existence of God and the union of soul and body; both of which baffle our comprehension. Every truth relating to the divine nature must necessarily transcend the comprehension of a finite creature. To believe in the mystery of the incarnation, it should be sufficient for us to know that God has revealed it in His Holy Word, and that the most glorious blessings are connected with it.—Br. HOBART'S *Nelson's Festivals and Fasts*, p. 201.

have been pertinaciously urged against this and other peculiar doctrines of the Gospel by Deists and Socinians, are equally valid against, yea, and rebound with double force upon, their own systems and opinions, which they fancy are so very clear and comprehensible. All that a Christian needs is to be assured that "thus saith the Lord." If any thing be clearly ascertained, and handed down to us by the Church, as the teaching of God's Holy Word, it is not the place of man to speculate, or question, or cavil, but to believe. It is not for him to demand reasons, and to refuse to believe because he cannot fully understand; it is rather his place to receive the revelation of God concerning Himself and the scheme of redemption, in humble, hearty faith, knowing that it is the height of arrogance and folly for poor finite man to think of comprehending the Infinite and the Eternal. After the full proof which has been laid before you, it cannot be a matter of question with any one of us, whether or no the doctrine of the incarnation is revealed in Scripture, neither can we remain in any doubt as to our obligation to believe it. "The Word was made or became flesh," is the positive declaration of Holy Writ, and it can mean nothing else than that He, whom the Apostle calls the Word, the Second Person in the ever blessed Trinity, took our nature upon Him, became a man like unto us in all respects, sin only excepted, possessed of the feelings and affections of human nature, liable to the troubles and trials of a man, and susceptible of pain and anguish, of joy and gladness.

II. Thus much may suffice for the present respecting this great "mystery of godliness:" we may, however, profitably consider what is further said in the text concerning the Divine Redeemer while on earth. "He dwelt among us." Yes, though so inconceivably high, though He was the "Mighty God," yet He condescended to dwell or sojourn among us; not in lofty state, not as a king or conqueror, not as entitled to the honors and distinctions of men. So far from this, it was as the holy prophet Isaiah had hundreds of years before predicted: "He had no form nor comeliness in the eyes of men; and when they saw Him, there was no beauty that

they should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; * * He was despised, and they esteemed him not.”¹ And as the Evangelist tells us, “He had not where to lay His head.”² Thus it was that the blessed Saviour “dwelt among us;” the Lord of light and life not only veiled His eternal glory in human form, not only stooped so low as to become a man, a mortal man like unto ourselves; but still lower did He humble Himself for our sakes; there was no pillowed couch, no gorgeous array; there were no anxious and waiting friends to greet His advent into the world; nay, not even the common necessities and conveniences of life were at hand; for His virgin mother “brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.”³

In so humble a condition as this, and with so unmeet attendant circumstances, as man might think, did the Eternal Word become flesh, and in accordance with so lowly a beginning did He dwell among us. If we read the simple and affecting narratives which His Apostles and Evangelists have handed down to us, we cannot but see in what way the Almighty Saviour was pleased to dwell among men, and for

1) Is. liii. 2, 3,

2) Matt. viii. 20.

3) Luke ii. 7.

3) Blessed Jesus, since Thou wouldest be a man, why wouldest Thou not be the king of men? Since Thou wouldest come down to our earth, why wouldest Thou not enjoy the best entertainment the earth could yield Thee? Yea, since Thou who art the Eternal Son of God, wouldest be the son of man, why didst Thou not appear in a state like to the King of Heaven, attended with the glorious retinue of angels? O yet greater wonder of mercies, the same infinite love that brought Thee down to the form of man, would also bring Thee down, being man, to the form of a servant! So didst Thou love man, that Thou wouldest take part with him of his misery, that he might take part with Thee of Thy blessedness: Thou wouldest be poor to enrich us; Thou wouldest be burdened for our ease; tempted for our victory; despised for our glory. * * * O Saviour, whither hath Thy love to mankind carried Thee? What sighs, and groans, and tears, and blood, hast Thou spent upon us wretched men! How dear a price hast Thou paid for our ransom! What raptures of spirit can be sufficient for the admiration of Thy so infinite mercy? Be thou swallowed up, O my soul, in this depth of Divine love; and hate to spend thy thoughts any more upon the base objects of this wretched world, when thou hast such a Saviour to take them up.—BP. HALL, “*Meditation on the Love of Christ*,” Sect V.

what purpose. I have just said it was with none of the pomp and show in which this vain world so much delights, it was not in wealth and luxury, it was not in any way calculated to feed or gratify the pride and gain the favor and countenance of man ; but it was as the friend of publicans and sinners, the friend of the poor and destitute, the needy and neglected, the widow and the orphan. The Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him, the Christ, to preach the gospel to the poor ; He had sent Him to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.¹ It was thus that He lived, since it was His meat and drink to do His Father's will in all things :—and this day, and this house, which so fitly expresses our joy because of His coming, are evidences that we feel it to be our duty to follow in the footsteps of His most holy life ; that we desire to drink in, day by day, and year by year, more and more of the spirit of meekness, humility, and entire obedience which He manifested in all its perfection and fulness.

As respects the *purpose* or *object* of the incarnation of the Son of God, the same Holy Scriptures which declare the fact, also make known the intent. The Lord Jesus came into the world with a special object in view, viz. “to save sinners,” “to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,” to destroy for ever the power of sin, Satan, and death, and to open unto us the gate of everlasting life. Surely, He did not become flesh and dwell among us, in order to amuse, or make us wonder ; or in order that we might hear of it as a marvellous great thing of other days and other lands, and be astonished and go on our way the same as ever ; neither was it simply as a teacher or revealer of the Word of God, that the Divine Saviour came and sojourned on earth ; nor was it only to publish among men a more perfect moral system than had ever been known, and to set us an example of how a man may and ought to live. Such an object alone, it

1) Luke iv. 18, 19.

were unworthy to attribute to the Lord of heaven and earth ; and if this had been all that He intended to perform or did perform, it could not meet the wants of sinful, guilty men, or satisfy the cravings of the hungry soul for immortality. It was for a higher and more glorious object that the Lord Jesus came and dwelt among us ; it was to atone for the sins of the whole world ; it was to suffer, and to die, and to save His people from their iniquities ; it was (in the language of the prophet) to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows ; to be stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted ; it was to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities, to have the chastisement of our peace upon Him, and that with His stripes we might be healed ; it was that the Lord might lay upon Him the iniquity of us all ; it was that He might purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost, to sanctify and cleanse the hearts and purge the consciences of all people ; and that through the merits of the Redeemer we might receive pardon, be restored to the favor of our justly offended Maker, and have good hope of eternal life.—Away, then, with the flimsy pretensions and boasts of the Socinian—ah, and still worse, (for the truth must be told,) with his daring impiety in seeking to rob the Lord of light and life of the glory and worship which are his due ! And as for ourselves, while we look with holy horror and indignation upon tenets so pernicious and so unchristian, let us bless God that we are preserved from the wiles of the arch-deceiver, and that we have the pure and holy faith once delivered to the saints ; and let us pray for those who know not what they do, that the Lord visit not upon them the just consequences of their ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of His Holy Word.

While we rejoice in the blessed privilege of assembling together once more to praise God the Father for the incarnation of His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, let us remember who He is, and for what purpose He came ; let us moderate our joy, or rather take heed that it be such a joy as, while it leads us to cling to Him as one who was man, may make us continually and thankfully wor-

ship and adore Him as God our Saviour. Let us meditate upon the wondrous love which this day is exhibited before us in the nativity of our gracious Lord and Master; the love which the Father has, who gave His only begotten Son to die for us; and the love which our Redeemer possesses in that He came and died for us while we were yet sinners, rebels against His laws, and despisers of the riches of His grace. And when we look upon the Holy Child, lying in a manger, in all the weakness and helplessness of infancy, and then think that He is the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace, that He has stooped so low as to clothe Himself with our nature, to take upon Him all the infirmity, and pain, and trial, and anguish, which are the lot of mortal man; when we see and think upon these things, which are too great and too mysterious for us to comprehend in their fulness and manifold relations, and to be reached and applied to the soul by living, active faith alone, O let us put away from us every proud thought, let us humble ourselves at the foot of the cross, and pray that we may imbibe the spirit of our Master who died thereon, that we may have more and more of His self-denying, humble, and obedient spirit. Let this day be to all of us a day of devout gratitude and prayer—a day on which we may look back with holy thankfulness to God, that He, having begun a good work in us, has perfected it in the Lord Jesus. And let it be a day of entire consecration of ourselves, souls, bodies, and spirits, to the worship and obedience of our incarnate Lord, that we may be a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.¹

1) Rom. xii. 1.



Christmas.

SERMON V.

THE REJECTION OF CHRIST THE SIN OF EVERY AGE.

JOHN i. 11.—“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

IT is in such brief but comprehensive words that the Apostle speaks concerning the advent of the Divine Redeemer, and the reception which He met with from the creatures of His hand ; it is thus, too, that he teaches us the unutterable and infinite love of the adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the obstinate and perverse ingratitude of man, for whom so great things have been done. What more fitting topic could occupy our thoughts on this holy day ! what more seemly, on this high festal day, than to have our hearts deeply imbued with the wholesome reflections which the words of the Evangelist suggest ! what more becoming for ransomed and pardoned mortals than to offer up the praises and thanksgivings of grateful hearts ; or to come into His holy temple, fall low on our knees before His footstool, and exclaim, with the multitude of the heavenly host, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men !” In the full belief that we may (if we seek aright) be thus occupied, and being thus occupied may have good reason to expect the blessing of God to rest upon us, I have chosen the text from among the introductory verses of St. John’s Gospel ; and I am not without hope that we may be enabled to derive both warning and instruction from the passage just recited in your ears.

I. Let us, then, bear in mind of whom the Beloved Disci-

ple says, "He came to His own." This is no other than the Eternal Word, the Second Person of the blessed Trinity; no other than He who was in the beginning, who was with God, in intimate and inexplicable union, and who was Himself God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. He it is who created all material things, and by whom every living creature was brought into existence; He is the source of all life; He is the centre of all light, the glorious Son of Righteousness (as the prophet calls him); He is the Light who shines in darkness, even though the darkness comprehends it not; He is the true Light which has come into the world to dispel the dark mists of sin and corruption, and which gives light to every soul that is willing and prepared to receive it; He is the Word who became flesh, and who dwelt among men to fulfil the mission of love and mercy on which He came;¹ yea, this Divine Being, this God-man, is He of whom the Evangelist speaks, and whose coming he declares in the text. The only begotten Son, who left for a season the bosom of the Father, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is He who came, in the fulness of time, to accomplish the gracious purposes of God respecting our race.

II. But to whom did He come? to whom did He go about preaching the Gospel? and to whom did He offer eternal salvation through his all-atoning blood? The Apostle answers, "He came to His own." He had come, for ages

1) "Mysterious truth! that the self-same should be

A Lamb, a Shepherd, and a Lion too!

Yet such was He

Whom first the shepherds knew,

When they themselves became

Sheep to the Shepherd-Lamb.

Shepherd of men and angels,—Lamb of God,—

Lion of Judah,—by these titles keep

The wolf from thy endangered sheep.

Bring all the world into thy fold;

Let Jews and Gentiles hither come

In numbers great, that ean't be told;

And call Thy lambs, that wander, home.

Glory be to God on high;

All glories be to the glorious Deity."

BP. JEREMY TAYLOR, *Works*, Vol. III. p. 743.

past, to His chosen people, the offspring of Abraham, in various ways: sometimes by angelic messengers sent from the courts above, sometimes by visible manifestations of His glory, sometimes by marked interpositions in their favor, or as the Avenger punishing the guilty and rebellious; but more generally He had come to them by the ministry of His prophets, whom He raised up from time to time to testify against their wickedness and idolatry, and to warn them of the sore and heavy judgments which would surely be visited on them except they repented and amended. Now, however, He came Himself to His own. He took upon Him the nature of man, and came in His own person to His own people, that He might give them the last and most stupendous exhibition of compassion and good which the universe ever beheld.¹—It was to this people that He came in the days of His flesh, to them who were solemnly bound to believe and obey the

1) "And this shall be a sign," &c. (Luke ii. 12.) Blessed Lord! What a sign was this? *Swaddling clothes!* a stable, a *manger!* Is it so the King of Israel is born? the Creator of all the ends of the earth! is He wrapped in *swaddling* bands? The Eternal Word! the Angel of the Covenant! is He speechless and mute? The Everlasting Father! an infant of a day old? The Mighty God! a suckling, a babe? Is this the way He manifests Himself to the world? Are these the *signs* by which the shepherds are to know their long expected Messiah, their King, their Saviour, and their God? O mystery of the incarnation! too big for human reason to conceive! too mortifying for human pride to believe! It needed an *angel*, yea a *host of angels*, to attest a truth so contrary to the apprehensions of earthly wisdom, so opposite to the mistaken notions of His own people! a truth, which nothing but faith, a humble faith, divested of all prejudice, all worldly conceit, a faith reduced to an infant-like simplicity can ever embrace and receive; and therefore was first revealed to humble *shepherds*. Hence it comes to pass, that to proud spirits and worldly-wise, this article of the Christian creed, a God incarnate, remains still an insuperable obstacle and stone of offence. But beware, ye skeptics and unbelievers, "lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you;" (Acts xiii. 40, 41;) nay, though an angel from heaven confirm it! Judicial blindness is the just punishment, a most noted effect of a wilful ignorance. But be we assured, there is no peace with God, but through Christ and Him incarnate: no salvation but through Christ and Him crucified. By this faith, and this only, is accomplished the full purport of the angelic song at our Lord's Nativity, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." Amen. So be it.—WOGAN *On the Lessons*, Vol. I. p. 185.

law of God, and who were professedly waiting for the consolation of Israel, the Messiah promised from the beginning of the world. To these, who were His own, not only by right of creation and preservation, but also because they were members of His Church as constituted under Moses, because they had solemnly promised to obey His laws and to keep His commandments, and because their services were accepted and their prayers heard, only through Him, the one Mediator between God and man, the one all-sufficient sacrifice which their sacrificial offerings prefigured, and from which every offering received its efficacy; to these, thus bound to Him, thus professing to worship and to believe in Him, to these He came; to these, in His own person and by His own mouth, He proclaimed the glad tidings of great joy, giving them the fullest evidences that He was the Messiah of God, the One whom the Spirit of the Lord had anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, the One sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.¹ And to these, His own people, He made the rich offer of eternal life and peace through Himself; He called them to come and drink of the Fountain of living waters, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst; He promised them light, grace, and strength, which His death would purchase for them; and finally, He poured out His precious blood upon the cross; He made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of His chosen people, and for the sins of the whole world.

Here, my brethren, I must interpose a very necessary caution: the Evangelist's inspired declaration is, it is true, primarily and properly applicable to the Jews; they were, as has been said, the chosen people of God; they were the Saviour's "own;" and, according to the promise, the Saviour came to them in person, and proclaimed to them the glad tidings of great joy; but it is not hence to be supposed

1) Luke iv. 18.

that the rest of mankind are not the Saviour's own in another and also proper sense ; neither must it be forgotten that the Saviour came to these His own, though not in person, yet as truly and as certainly as in the case of the descendants of Abraham. He, in whom we live and move and have our being, never left Himself without witness in the earth ; He created and preserved in being the whole race of man ; He gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness ;¹ He impressed upon them the law of conscience, which bears witness in every action, and either accuses or else excuses the man ; and though, for wise purposes in time past, He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, to test their own sufficiency, and to be humbled with a realizing sense of their own weakness and blindness, yet all this time He was not far from every one of them—all this time they might feel after and perchance find Him, as we have good hope they did in some if not many cases. Thus, He came to these in the ways and dispensations of His providence ; but more manifestly did He come to all people and nations after the days of His incarnation. Just before He ascended into heaven, to act as the Mediator and Intercessor for all mankind, He commanded His apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature ; He commanded them to plant His Church in every portion of the habitable earth ; to bring all nations into covenant with Him ; and to initiate into His holy religion, by baptism, every individual of the human race, whether young or old, infant or adult ; and they did as He commanded. The North and the South, the East and the West, heard the good news of salvation from the heralds of the cross, for their sound went out into all lands : and in every region were households, and families, and kindreds, enlisted under the banner of the Divine Redeemer, to fight the good fight of faith, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto their life's end. And thus, the Lord Jesus came to His own, wherever they might dwell ; His own in the same peculiar sense with

1) Acts xiv 17.

the Jews ; His own, not only because He had redeemed them by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross, not only because He had purchased them by paying the price demanded, but because they had solemnly, openly, and freely professed themselves His people, and bound themselves to do whatsoever He commanded. Thus, too, has He come to His own in every age, by the ministry, worship, and sacraments of His holy Church ; and thus has He come to us, His own by purchase, His own by having made us members of His body, the Church, and His own by having covenanted to us all the blessings, all the hopes, all the comforts of His Gospel.—Such being the comprehensive sense in which the Evangelist's expression concerning the persons to whom Christ the Lord came, is to be understood, we are properly brought to the inquiry,

III. What was the reception He met with ? What was the conduct of those to whom the Saviour came in His own person, and afterwards by His commissioned ambassadors ? St. John again answers (in the text), "His own received Him not."—Yes, my brethren, strange as it may seem, astonishing as it really is, His own peculiar people received Him not : they who had for ages been waiting for the Messiah ; they who had had committed to them God's holy truth ; and who had been specially blest with the "prophetic word," pointing surely to the day of Christ's coming ; they, when in the fulness of time He actually came, did not and would not receive Him. They on whom He had so many claims, who were His own in so high a sense, they rejected Him ; they cast away from them His holy precepts, they made light of His claims, they spurned His offers of salvation, they attributed His miracles to diabolic agency, they obstinately refused to believe His doctrines, and they crowned their most astounding wickedness and unbelief by preferring a robber and a murderer to Him, and by subjecting the innocent and sinless Saviour to a cruel and ignominious death upon the cross. Such was the ungrateful reception which the Saviour met with from the great body of His own people : while there were some who received Him as

the Divine Messiah promised to the father of the faithful, and believed on Him in the days of His flesh, yet they were few, very few in comparison with the numbers who received Him not. The mass of the people rejected Him, and madly exclaimed, "His blood be on us and on our children;" and the mass of the Jews have ever since rejected Him, vainly supposing, vainly expecting, in the face of all the prophecies, which they profess to believe, that the Messiah is yet to come.

But this conduct of the chosen people is not without its parallel among many to whom the Gospel was subsequently preached by the Apostles and their successors. Multitudes in every age have had the glad tidings of great joy proclaimed to them; they have been told, on the authority of God Himself, that they are His own; and they have been both commanded and exhorted to be born again in the holy sacrament of baptism, to be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and to feed on the precious Body and Blood of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and yet, with similar obstinacy, with similar perverseness to that of the Jews, they have rejected the Blessed Redeemer; they have refused to believe; they have continued in impenitence and hardness of heart: and still more, multitudes in preceding ages, and in our own day, have been made members of Christ's Church by baptism, and thus become His own in the peculiar and highest sense of the expression; multitudes have been admitted to all the privileges of the Gospel, and have had held out to them pardon, peace, and sanctification, through the Redeemer's merits; and still have turned away from all these, have been content to remain in worldliness and sin, or in love with the perishing vanities of earth; and thus have rejected the Lord Jesus, receiving Him not as He must be received in order to be of any avail.¹

1) We Christians cannot, indeed, be guilty of the very same offence in crucifying the Lord of Glory; but it behooves us to consider, whether we may not be guilty in the same kind, and, by our sins and iniquities, "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame;" (Heb. vi. 6;) and therefore whether, being like them in their crime, we may not also resemble them in their punishment. They rejected the Messiah, and we indeed have received Him; but have

Yea, my brethren, is it not so to a lamentable extent in this parish? Ye are the Saviour's own people; ye have all been redeemed by Him; and most of you are His covenanted people by baptism; yet how sadly true is it that, though the Lord Jesus has come to you, day by day, and year by year, still too many whom I address have received Him not; too many of those to whom this Lord has sent me to preach His Gospel, and to warn them that they are His, do not receive the declarations of their Master; do not seem to believe that they are not their own, because they are bought with a price; and do not realize that except they repent and believe they shall surely perish. Oh, why is this? why will men be so hardened and blinded? how can they be so ungrateful and unthankful towards so gracious a Redeemer? how is it possible for those who are the Saviour's own people to turn away from Him, and practically deny His right to all that they are or may be, and all that they possess? how is it possible for the baptized into Christ to delude themselves so grievously as to suppose that baptism alone will save them, or as to think that any thing but

our lives been at all agreeable to our holy profession; or rather, as we have had opportunities of knowing Christ more, have we not obeyed Him less than other Christians, and "trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith we are sanctified, an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. x. 29.) The flagrant crimes of the Jews, and the principal sources of their calamities, in the opinion of Josephus, were their trampling upon all human laws, deriding divine things, and making a jest of the oracles of the prophets as so many dreams and fables; and how hath the same spirit of licentiousness and infidelity prevailed likewise among us! How have the laws and lawful authority been insulted with equal insolence and impunity! How have the Holy Scriptures, those treasures of Divine Wisdom, not only been neglected, but despised, denied, and abused to the worst purposes! How have the principal articles of our faith been denied, the prophecies and miracles of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and His Apostles, been ridiculed, and impiety and blasphemy, not only been whispered in the ear, but proclaimed from the press! How hath all public worship and religion, and the administration of the sacraments, been slighted and contemned, and the Sabbath profaned by those chiefly who ought to set a better example, to whom much is given, and of whom therefore much will be required! And if for their sins and provocations "God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear." (Rom. xi. 21, 20.)—*BP. NEWTON On the Prophecies*, p. 385.

or without the "new creature," can avail in Christ Jesus? how is it possible for them to add sin to sin by continual putting off of the imperative demands which their Master is daily making by His Word and His Church, and by continual rejection of the holiness, purity, and self-denial of His blessed Gospel? I ask you, my brethren, how these things can be so among reasonable and sensible men? and I beseech you to ask yourselves how you or any can expect to grow in grace, when you turn away from, and practically despise the richest and most precious means of grace, which the Lord Jesus has provided, in the sacrament of His blessed Body and Blood? Often, again and again, have you been invited, nay, urged by God Himself, to come to His holy table; often has it been made my painful duty to read in your ears that most eloquent and most touching exhortation which the Church has provided when the people are negligent to come to the Holy Communion; and far too often am I compelled to go about from house to house, and ask why and how it is that so many can resist the pleadings of the Spirit, and the positive commands of their Lord and Master? Believe me, from the depth of my heart I say it, that nothing but an imperative sense of duty could ever induce the minister of the cross to discharge so unthankful an office as this; nothing but the constraining love of Christ and the woe which he feels is denounced against him if he preach not the Gospel, in season and out of season, could ever sustain him under the disheartening and discouraging effects of his best attempts and most earnest strivings to arouse the dull, and the cold, and the careless, and the impenitent, to a full and practical realization of the awful obligations resting upon them. While there is enough, and more than enough, to startle him who watches for souls, knowing that he must give account; it would be a wholesome consideration for parishes to remember that more than once Christ's ambassador has worn himself out in struggling against the sloth and wickedness of the Lord's own people, and laid down in an early grave, because of these things:—what a fearful thought that his blood crieth from the ground for vengeance against the despisers of God's law and

the contemners of His grace ! Oh, my brethren, let us take heed to ourselves, in our respective capacities, that we may give account with joy, and not with grief ; and let those who have heretofore held back from deep, genuine repentance and amendment, do thus no longer ; let them rather resolve now, in the strength of the Spirit, to hear and obey with all their heart and soul and mind : and this day shall be an holy day, a day of rejoicing as long as you are permitted to remain on the earth, and a day of unutterable, never-ending rejoicing in the mansions of bliss above. Be persuaded to believe and put your whole trust in that Divine Saviour, whose incarnation for your sakes we this day celebrate : be persuaded to believe and obey Him at once, and you shall never, never repent it ; nay, you shall be a crown of rejoicing to him who ministers among you and is over you in the Lord ; angels in the presence of God shall joy over you, and sing glad hallelujahs before His throne ; and you shall ere long receive the end of your faith and patient endurance, even the eternal salvation of your souls.



Epiphany.

SERMON VI.

CHRIST JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

JOHN xii. 46.--“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”

THESE words of the Blessed Redeemer are among the last which St. John has recorded as being delivered in the course of His public ministrations. The remaining time of His abode on earth previous to His crucifixion, was “spent in quiet retirement with His disciples, to the end that, before His departure, He might impart to them still other germs of instruction, which should afterwards, under the fostering influences of the Spirit of God, be awakened to living principles within them.”¹ The Evangelist does not tell us on what occasion these words were uttered, or to whom they were addressed; it is, however, a matter of comparatively minor importance as to this point, or whether they be regarded in the light of a summary or brief statement of our Lord’s doctrines and teachings, expressed in His own words; because, in either case, they are equally true and equally binding on us. Occurring, as these verses do, (from the forty-fourth to the fiftieth inclusive,) immediately after the account of a number of important events, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they are connected, certainly in sense if not in point of time, with what precedes. In the former part of the chapter, mention is made of the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, and His being acknow-

1) THOLUCK *On St. John*, p. 302.

ledged by the multitude as the long expected Messiah. "Hosanna! (was the gladsome shout,) blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." The miraculous raising from the dead of Lazarus, and the strong and living evidence which this afforded of the Messiah's Divine power, so stirred up the envy and hatred of the chief priests, that they consulted together to put Lazarus to death, to endeavor by all means to draw off the people's minds from this miracle, and, as soon as a plausible pretext could be found, to seize upon the Lord Jesus and take away His life. Our Lord, however, continues His heavenly discourse, predicts His death and the manner of it, and urges upon them to avail themselves of the rich privileges and blessings which He offers. "But, (says the beloved disciple,) though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him," even as the prophet Isaiah, many hundred years before, had foretold, because of the hardness and blindness of their hearts. Nevertheless, while this was true of the mass of the nation, and especially of the proud and envious Pharisees, still "among the chief rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." If now these circumstances be borne in mind, and if it be considered how greatly grieved the Saviour must have been on account of this shameful denial of Him because of the fear of men, and on account of the measure of the chosen people's iniquity being now almost full, we shall, perhaps, be inclined to think with the venerable translators of the Bible, that "Jesus now calleth earnestly for confession of faith;" for an open, honest avowal of their belief in Him, who has come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Him should not abide in darkness. Understanding, then, the Saviour's words to be addressed not only to those who heard Him speak in the days of His flesh, but to all who should come after and have the blessed Gospel preached unto them, let us, as eminently befitting our assembling in His name and presence on this festal day which

commemorates His manifestation to the Gentiles, meditate upon His declaration, seek to be imbued with its spirit, and to apply its plain teaching to our hearts and consciences. Our gracious Redeemer in the text sets forth *in what character He has come into the world ; and for what purpose.*

I. "I am come a light into the world." Under this expressive and comforting character God has often been represented in His holy Word. "The Lord is my light and my salvation," says the pious psalmist. "The Lord God is a sun and shield!"¹ "The sun shall no more be thy light by day: neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee," says the holy prophet Isaiah, in the comfortable words which he was sent to speak to the Church: "but the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."² "Unto you that fear my name," are the words of God Himself, by the last of His prophets, "shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings."³ Devout Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, was blessed in beholding the Lord's Christ, the "light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel."⁴ "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all,"⁵ says St. John; and the Divine Saviour, says the same Apostle, was "the light of men." He was "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."⁶ And He declared of Himself to the Jews, "I am the light of the world;" and again, in the text, "I am come a light into the world."⁷ It being our privilege to rejoice in this light, let us endeavor by the Holy Spirit's gracious aid to see and understand how truly the Saviour is and has always been the light of the world.

He may be regarded, *First, as giving light to the understanding.* It was this that the affectionate Apostle St. Paul made a subject of prayer to God concerning his Ephesian brethren, that the "eyes of their understanding might be enlightened;"⁸ and he speaks of it as one of the marks

1) Ps. xxvii. 1; lxxxiv. 11.

2) Is. lx. 19.

3) Mal. iv. 2.

4) Luke ii. 32.

5) 1 John i. 5.

6) John i. 4, 9.

7) Jno. viii. 12; ix. 5.

8) Eph. i. 18.

and miseries of the Gentiles, who walk in the vanity of their mind, that they "have the understanding darkened."¹ Christ Jesus is the light to which the Apostles directed them. Their so-called philosophy and wisdom, their skill and knowledge, their learning and intelligence, were all darkness, or at best as the twinkling starlight compared with the glorious noonday radiance; these had never been able to enlighten the understanding, and make men to see clearly; they had never been able to point out the pathway to heaven; to give comfort or peace to the soul burdened with sin and dreading the wrath to come; or to discover the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. No—we, into whose hearts God has shined, can see and feel how great was the moral darkness that has ever brooded over heathen and unchristian lands; and in proportion to the fulness with which the eyes of our understandings have been enlightened, we are fitted to comprehend the value and the necessity of the light of truth, and the merciful kindness of our Redeemer, who declares that He has come a light into the world. It is not needful to enter upon any course of argument to prove that the Saviour is the only source of light to the understanding: it is sufficient that there be set before you a few plain facts, leaving you to draw the necessary conclusion. Whatever men in these days may think or say, and however much greater light and knowledge they may suppose themselves to possess, on some points at least, yet it is undeniable that no nation of ancient or modern times has been able to arrive at the knowledge of the true God, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth, except the Saviour has given light to their understanding by His Gospel and His Church. Their own history, their laws, customs, and manners, the writings of their wisest and best men, fully establish this fact. The light of reason and conscience, it is true, does shine in every heathen nation, and in the heart of every man, and according to their use of this light, every one among them will be rewarded or punished; but reason

1) Eph. iv. 18.

alone has never given more than a feeble light: it was never able to show men the way out of the mists and thick darkness in which they groped. And the gross idolatry and corruption, the abominable and cruel rites of heathenism, and the wide-spread ignorance which prevailed, were then and are now *the facts* in regard to their state and condition.¹ However improved and cultivated the understanding may have been in science and worldly wisdom, in which respects many of them equalled if not surpassed us, yet in heavenly learning, in that knowledge which informs a man why and for what he is living, which tells him of another and an eternal state of existence, which shows him how and by whom a guilty conscience may be purged and the promise of immortal life secured; in this their understandings were darkened; and, as a natural consequence, they and all the heathen were alienated from the life of God that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart; and they, continues the Apostle, "being past feeling, gave themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."² Such has ever been the unhappy condition of those who are in the darkness of the natural understanding; and if, as we see, the condition of men in our age and country is greatly improved, it is not because of any greater light or ability they have of themselves, or because their understandings are naturally any better than those of the heathen; far from it: they "may have tolerably just notions of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, of the worship due to Him, of the ground and extent of moral obligation, and even of a future state of retribution. But from whence do they derive these notions? Not from the dictates of their own unassisted reason, but (as the skeptic philosopher, Rousseau, himself confesses) from those very Scriptures which they despise and revile, from the early impressions of education, from living and conversing in a Christian country, where those doctrines are publicly taught, and where, in spite of themselves, they imbibe some portion of that reli-

1) See ABP. MAGEE *On the Atonement* (Vol. I. pp. 83-109) for some very valuable remarks on this subject.

2) Eph. iv. 18, 19.

gious knowledge which the Sacred Writings have every where diffused and communicated to the *enemies* as well as the friends of the gospel."¹

But the Saviour does not give light to the understanding alone: it is not impossible that men's understandings may be enlightened so that they can and do perceive and comprehend many of the truths of the Gospel. I have seen, and I doubt not you too have seen, many who know and understand well enough their duty and obligations, who yet go no farther. Something more is needed: men might have their understandings and perceptions enlightened, and yet be practical infidels. We may, therefore, *Secondly*, consider the Saviour *as giving light to the heart and affections*. I am disposed to urge this upon you with the more earnestness, because I am persuaded that so many stop short just where they ought not; because so many are content to understand just enough of the Gospel and its requirements to do them no good, and only aggravate their guilt in the sight of God. If the Saviour do not give light to the heart and affections—if men, in other words, will not open unto Him when He stands at the door and knocks, ready to pour into the inmost recesses of the soul a flood of life-giving light, then it is certain all their knowledge and understanding will be of no avail. Indeed, this is more needful than the other. Most of men are not drawn to the Saviour by the previous enlightening of the understanding. They are rather drawn by the cords of affection; by the realizing sense of their sins and guilt, and of the Redeemer's power to forgive and restore; they feel their wants, and they love the Saviour for supplying them; they love Him because He has sent a beam divine into their souls, and made them to see how precious He is to them who believe, and, because they love Him, they believe in Him. It sometimes happens that their understandings or mental capacities are hardly at all, or only partially, enlightened. Many

1) BP. PORTEUS'S "*Evidences*," &c. p. 9; see also, BP. WATSON'S "*Apology for Christianity*," p. 124.

a poor and illiterate man, who, from various causes, knows little or nothing of the reasons which influence men of greater learning and abilities to give hearty assent to the truth of Christianity, is yet strong in faith and devotion, and truly enlightened in heart and affection by the blessed Saviour; and when the last award shall come, it may be found that because he has loved much and believed implicitly and with his whole heart, he will be exalted above many who know more, so far as we see, but love and believe less. Think not that I am undervaluing the privileges and the blessings of knowledge. On the contrary, be assured that the Christian neglects no opportunity to grow in knowledge as well as in grace. It is our duty and the duty of every man to improve the talents intrusted to him; but from the nature and necessity of the case it will always happen that the majority of the community can make but moderate advances in learning, and can cultivate and improve the understanding only to a limited extent. That they may, however, notwithstanding all this, be enlightened in heart and affections, and be as truly devoted to the Saviour in a life of penitence, faith, and obedience, experience clearly shows. The Saviour does shine into the hearts of the humble and contrite; He does give light to those who sit in darkness, and cry to Him in the words of the poor blind man, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." By His holy Word and by His Church He enlightens not only the understanding, but also the soul; and by His holy sacraments, which He has made to be channels of grace to the believer, He makes men children of light, and sends His Holy Spirit to reveal more and more to them, and to shine into the soul with the "marvellous light" of the glorious Gospel of peace. He leads us on, step by step, in our journey towards our heavenly home; He refreshes us with the comfort and light of His presence; and if sincerely and truly we strive, in His strength to do His will, we shall know, (the promise is positive and secure to every man)—*we shall know* of the doctrine whether it be of God or of men; we shall know, that the light which has been shed upon us, sanctifying our souls, inciting us to daily love and

obedience, and urging us on in our Christian course, has come from Him who is the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness, the centre and source of all spiritual light and life. It is in this glorious and cheering character that our Saviour represents Himself to have come into the world ; it is in this respect, likewise, that He is very precious to the pious soul ; and it is as the Light of the whole man that I have wished to place Him before you, that you might be able to see for yourselves whether He has been a light to you, or whether you are yet in darkness and spiritual deadness.

II. The latter clause of the text, expressing as it does, in part at least, the *purpose* or *object* of the Saviour's coming a light into the world, deserves a more full consideration than can now be given. This, however, is the less to be regretted, if what has been said has made its due impression ; for if the Saviour has proved the source of light to you, He will not suffer you to abide in darkness. One thing, however, must be suggested for your private meditation and prayer. "I am come a light into the world," and for this purpose, or to accomplish this object, "that whosoever *believeth* on me should not abide in darkness." The absolute necessity of faith in the Redeemer is here distinctly set forth, in order that we may be brought out of the darkness and blindness of our natural state, and enabled to see and feel the light which the Saviour pours into the faithful soul. By a living, active faith alone, can we abide in light ; and we may be sure that even as a man may shut out the light of the natural sun by closing his eyes, or fastening up the place where he is, so he may keep out the rays of Divine grace and truth from shining into his soul, by obstinately and wilfully shutting up his heart against the secret monitions, and pleadings of the Holy Spirit, who is daily moving him and offering him help to open the eyes of his understanding and affections. He, the life-giving Spirit, plants the germ of faith and nourishes it with Divine care, and if man do not crush it, do not choke it with the cares and toils of life, do not give it so little good ground that the Devil comes and

takes it away, it will grow up and bring forth fruit abundantly, and by means of it the Saviour will give light to the soul, and all the comforts and joys connected with it. Let it not, then, be forgotten, that we must believe would we not abide in darkness; we must have faith, would we desire or expect to behold "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."¹ We must pray God to give us faith; we must pray with the Apostles to the Saviour, "Lord, increase our faith."² We must, sooner than be content to abide in darkness, do as did the afflicted father of the child in whom was an evil spirit, "cry out and say with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."³ Be sure, my brethren, that there is one only way in which you can be enlightened and brought to the knowledge of the truth. The Sun of Righteousness may shine in all His noontide glory, and yet you not be profited by it—your hearts may remain as dull and cold and dark as ever: the few and scattered rays which penetrate only so far as to enlighten to a certain extent the understanding, will never be able to warm you into life, and only aggravate your condemnation. "Professing yourselves to be wise, (you may, as St. Paul says) become fools."⁴ You may say with the Pharisees, "we see," and you may with them incredulously ask "are we blind also?"⁵ and yet walk and abide in darkness.⁶ By every one

1) 2 Cor. iv. 6.

2) Luke xvii. 5.

3) Mark ix. 24.

4) Rom. i. 22.

5) Jno. ix. 40, 41.

6) What meanest thou, O besotted sinner? is it so light a thing to die in thy sins, and eternally for them, that thou wilt not so much as open and admit the light of salvation? What shalt thou pretend in that terrible day? Though all other kind of people should offer some excuse, thou who hast heard the Gospel shalt be speechless. For not only shall the rigor of justice condemn thee, but mercy itself shall plead against thee; for thou hast despised it. That light did come, and was not embraced, shall be the main condemnation. How many thousands that make no doubt of heaven, yet shall then fall short of it! It is not a superficial profession that will there pass current. It is not some public sighs and groans from an unsanctified heart, which either come from custom or some present touch of the word, nor yet is it some sudden risings of inward affection towards Christ, upon the report of His worth, that shall then serve the turn. The intellectual knowledge of Christ, the distinct understanding, yea, the orthodox preaching of His Gospel, the maintaining of His public cause and suffering for it, shall not then be found sufficient. Only that peculiar

among us the Saviour's words in the text ought to be cherished and laid up in memory, that our understandings, and especially our souls, may be enlightened, and that we may have such a true and lively faith, that we may be enabled even here, while looking through a glass darkly, to see in part the glories yet to be revealed in us ; and above all, that when death shall remove us from this transitory scene, we may see our Divine Lord as He is, and live ever more in eternal light and joy. "Wherefore, awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."¹

apprehension of Christ, those constant flames of spiritual love, that even course of holy walking in His light, shall be those characters whereby Christ shall own His children, and admit them into the inheritance of perfect light.—AEP. LEIGHTON'S *Works*, p. 375.

1) Eph. v. 14.



Septuagesima Sunday.

SERMON VII.

TWO GREAT SINS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

JER. ii. 12, 13.—“Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water”

THESE are the solemn and fearful words of God Himself by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah. They are spoken concerning His own, His chosen people, who had seen and experienced His greatness and His goodness, and of whom the Lord thus speaks: “I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was (then) holiness unto the Lord, and the first fruits of His increase.” He expostulates with His people because of their rebellion and revolt, and sets before them their unexampled wickedness: they did not say, “where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?”—No, though God, of his sovereign mercy, “brought them into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; yet, when they entered, they defiled His land, and made His heritage an abomination. The priests said not, where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew Him not: the pastors also trans-

gressed against Him, and the prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after things that do not profit." But, notwithstanding all this, their great and continual wickedness, notwithstanding they had so often and so grievously provoked the Lord to anger and vexed His Holy Spirit, He condescends still to reason with His people, and warn them of the dreadful consequences of their sins;—"Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead." O how great beyond example has been your rebellion against me; how madly eager has been your desire after the idolatrous vanities of the heathen! Yea, "my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit;" they have said "to a stock, thou art my father; and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face."¹—"Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Humbly supplicating the blessing and guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us to a correct knowledge and due appreciation of the momentous truths urged upon us in the text, let me beseech you to take note of the solemn warning which is herein conveyed to us, whether as individuals or as a nation.

Truly, the past history and present condition of the chosen people are full of instructive lessons; and amid the prevailing infidel tendencies of the day, and the scornful rejection of the sad and bitter teaching of experience, it may be well to remember and to lay it to heart, that national sins bring national calamities; however long the judgment may be delayed, however much it may seem that God suffers men (with impunity) to increase and riot in wickedness and blasphemous violations of His holy law, yet he does, sometimes suddenly, sometimes at a longer period, vindicate His glory and honor, "so that

a man shall say, (in the language of the Psalmist,) Verily, there is a reward for the righteous: doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth."¹ Abundant illustrations of this truth might easily be adduced out of the Scriptures, in the history and overthrow of the antediluvian nations and kingdoms; of the idolatrous and abominable Canaanites; of Sodom and Gomorrah; and of the mighty empires which once overspread the then known world: but that is rather beside the design of the present discourse, it being my desire to induce you, if I can, to think more upon that people's history which is written by the pen of inspiration; that people who were blessed above all the people of the earth, with whom God Himself condescended to dwell, and who, by a long and most astonishing catalogue of guilt and crime, provoked God's wrath and indignation against them, and are now a scorn, a by-word and contempt, among all the nations of the world. Their condition in the time of the prophet Jeremiah, may be learned from the heavy judgments which he was commissioned to denounce, from the sad lamentations to which, in the bitterness of his soul, he gives utterance, and from the brief account of their sins and their crimes recorded in their own chronicles. God was pleased in His wisdom to bear long with them; to send His messenger to plead with and to warn them; and by His visitations and punishments of a lighter kind, and shorter duration, to lead them to turn from the vanities of idolatry and corruption, unto the living and only true God; or else He would turn away from them, and leave them to the full measure of His justly incurred wrath. King David, in the 78th Psalm, has told us, in part, the story of their wickedness and hardness of heart, and of the mercy and long-suffering of the Lord; and the history of his successors on the throne, tells us only of the continuance and addition of sin and wickedness on the part of the people, and of renewed displays of the mercy of God. We all know their end, when their name and nation were taken away, and they were

1) Ps. lviii. 11.

scattered over the face of the earth. We all know, too, their miserable and degraded condition, as a people, now;—and well will it be, if we of this land give good heed to the lesson that may and ought to be learned from the consideration of their once favored and happy condition, and of the present dispersion of their persecuted and despised race. Well will it be, if we, as a nation, and as a Church, think upon the language of the excellent Bishop Horne: "Rebellion against God will, sooner or later, draw down His vengeance, and cause the most beloved nation to be 'abhorred' by Him. He will forsake the place of His residence, 'the tent placed among men,' where He dwelleth by His Spirit; and the Church, by which His 'strength' and His 'glory' are manifested to the world, shall go 'into captivity and the enemy's hand.' The present state of Jerusalem, and of all the once flourishing Eastern and African Churches, speaks aloud this awful and important truth. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'"¹—But, the inquiry suggests itself, what was the reason why these judgments came upon the chosen people of God? Why does He, speaking by the mouth of His prophet, call upon the very heavens and the heavenly host to "be astonished, and be horribly afraid?" Because it was something so surpassingly presumptuous, something so horribly dangerous, which His people had done, and which in their deadness and blindness they neither saw nor felt. "My people (saith the Lord) have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." *These* are the cause of the misery and calamity of that unhappy nation; and these may be held up as giving a seasonable warning to us of this highly favored land.

I. "THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS, SAITH THE LORD."

The character ascribed to God in this figurative, but highly expressive language, is one that must have been peculiarly striking to the inhabitants of tropical regions, and

1) *Commentary On the Book of Psalms*, p. 239.

commends itself to every Christian heart. Water, of all things the most grateful and the most needful to the support of the body, is here made to signify the value and the need of Divine grace to the thirsty soul; and a living stream, a perpetual supply of water, is regarded as the highest earthly blessing man can receive. How invaluable, then, must be the "Fountain of living waters!" and how inexpressibly favored is that people who have free and unlimited access to it! To the children of Israel, God was pleased to offer Himself as a never-failing fountain of goodness and mercy: in the fulness of His compassion, He gave them the strongest inducements to take the water of life freely. And was He not a "Fountain of living waters" to His people Israel? When did He refuse to satisfy those who came to draw water from the wells of salvation? When did He send the hungry or thirsty soul empty away? When did the pious descendant of faithful Abraham call upon the Lord in vain? Look at the history of the Jews—note the repeated and continual instances of the superintending Providence and miraculous interference of the Lord for His chosen people—how He watched over Jacob—how He wonderfully preserved and blessed Joseph, and gave him favor in the sight of Pharaoh—how he raised up Moses to be a deliverer unto His people, and to make His name to be magnified among the heathen—how He led them through the wilderness, and forty years long upheld and fed them day by day with the bounty of His hand—how He brought them into that delightful land which He had promised to Abraham and his seed—how He drove out and subdued all nations before them, fencing them in, giving them peace and prosperity, and demanding that they trust only in His arm, and in the might of His marvellous acts. When did the Lord do for any people what He did for them? When did He, whom "the heaven of heavens cannot contain," condescend to make His habitation among men, to be entreated of them, to have His ear ever open to their prayers, and to offer Himself as the source of all blessing and mercy? To whom else did He make known His will; to whom else did He send His prophets and holy men

to comfort and to warn the pious soul, and whom else did He call to the inestimable privilege of worshipping and serving Him in holiness and truth? In all these respects, and in countless others, God, of His mercy, was pleased to show Himself a "Fountain of living waters." Yet, with the knowledge of all this, and with a realizing sense of it, much beyond any power of language to describe, what was the result, as declared by God Himself in the text? "*They have forsaken Me*"—they have forsaken God, the Fountain of living waters—they have left the well-springs of life and joy—they wander to and fro in the barren and dry lands of this world, where no water is—they have gone away from the only Fountain which can fill the thirsty and the weary soul with comfort and support—they have forsaken the Lord—they have turned away from Him who alone can give them light, and grope in the dark and murky caverns where the rays of truth never enter. The mercy, the loving-kindness, the unexampled acts of grace and favor, the unspeakable blessings and privileges of being in covenant with the Lord of Hosts, all are forgotten; they have turned away from all these—they have forsaken the Lord.

II. This is but one "evil," of which God speaks in the text. They have done more—"THEY HAVE HEWED THEM OUT CISTERNS, BROKEN CISTERNS, THAT CAN HOLD NO WATER."

This is almost a necessary result of forsaking the Fountain of living waters, and the figurative language of the text most forcibly expresses this truth. The Jewish people, as we have seen, had forsaken the Lord, and had, as He Himself says, "turned their back unto Him, and not their face;" and they had added yet this more unto their grievous offence—they had "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." How strikingly and justly this sets forth the miserable exchange which they had made, every one can judge. To go from a living and ever-flowing Fountain, to a broken and empty cistern, is indeed the height of folly; to forsake the Lord and the blessings and mercies of His service, and turn to the service of stocks

and stones, to the corrupt and abominable rites of heathenism, is not only the height of folly and madness, but also the very extreme of presumptuous wickedness. This that people did, of whom Moses exclaimed, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!"¹ They hewed them out broken cisterns of idolatry, from which they endeavored in vain to draw water for the cravings of the soul—they loved the pleasures of sin—they lusted after the abominations of the heathen—they set up Baal and Ashtaroath, and the idols of the surrounding nations—they said "unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?"² And so they went on, from one step to another, from one wickedness to another, adding sin to sin, until at last came upon them, in one brief word, all that Moses, the man of God, had so solemnly and so clearly predicted as the result of their disobedience; they became "an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all the nations whither the Lord did lead them."³ Surely, well may it be said, "be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid: be ye very desolate, saith the Lord."⁴

1) Deut. xxxiii. 29.

2) Job xxi. 14, 15.

3) Deut. xxviii. 37.

4) If an additional motive could be required to the timely availing ourselves of God's spiritual aid, can a stronger be conceived than that which is the last conclusion which follows from the words of my text, (Luke xix. 42,) namely, that the deadness and blindness to all spiritual impressions of which I am speaking, is generally the forerunner of some signal vengeance of God, and almost always great in proportion to the degree of spiritual advantages which the sufferer has formerly enjoyed and neglected. The blindness which happened to Israel, the grossness of their hearts, and the dulness of their ears, were such as to us appear almost beyond belief. And were not their spiritual advantages, the works which were done among them, the warnings given them, the revelations communicated to them, at one time, altogether as remarkable? And what nation hath the earth ever seen, whose destruction was so signal, and attended with so much misery as theirs? O may we so shun their obstinacy as that we may not be given over to their blindness, but that we may know in this our day the things which belong unto our peace, before they are hid from our eyes, before the evil day come, and the years in which we shall say, we have no pleasure in them, and before that dreadful day in which we may cry to the God of mercy in vain for pardon and succor, when the sleep of death and the senseless

What now, my brethren, is the obvious lesson that ought to be learned by us from all this? What, as a nation, and as a Church? We, as a people and a nation, are indeed most highly blessed; the light of the ever blessed Gospel shines upon us—the Fountain of living waters is freely opened unto us, that we may drink and never thirst again—pardon for sin, and restoration to the favor of God, justly provoked by our sins, are held out for our acceptance—the Gospel is preached—the Church of the living God is continually lifting up her warning voice among us, and calling upon us to take of the water of life freely—the pure and unadulterated Word of God is in the hands of us all, and we may, if we will, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest its precious contents. Shall we not, then, as a nation, have to answer for all these things? Shall we, if we forsake the Lord, the Fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water, shall we escape? Shall not rather the retributive justice of God fall as heavy and as surely on *us*, as on the chosen people? Let us lay it to heart as a most solemn truth, that there has never been a nation or people that has had the Gospel preached to them, and turned away from it, but what has been visited with sore calamities and trials, as punishments for their national offences; and sure I am, that we who enjoy and boast of the blessings of civil and religious liberty, as raising us above most, if not all other nations of the world, have need to look well to it that we possess the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free; for if we do not, we are yet in the bondage of sin; we have forsaken the living Fountain, and have nothing but broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Nor is it only in our national capacity that we ought to take warning. As a portion of the whole Church of Christ, as a parish, we ought to be especially careful that it be not said of us, we have forsaken the Lord, the Fountain

of living waters. In truth, there is too much need that this warning be distinctly sounded in your ears. You have had for many years the invaluable blessings and privileges which God holds out in and by His Church, offered for your acceptance; and you have been entreated, and urged, and importunately besought to avail yourselves of them, now while you may: but how many in this congregation are there who have come to the Fountain of pure water of life? ah, how many rather have hewed them out broken cisterns! You have had the pathway of life pointed out plainly before you, and, in our Master's name, have been urged and commanded, as you value your immortal souls, to walk in it; but how many are there who have done so? How many have preferred to walk in their own way, and after their own heart's desire? If the Church in this village has not increased in numbers and grown in grace, and in greater holiness and devotion to our Master's service, whose is the fault? Certainly, we may not, nay, we dare not say, that the promises of God have not been as gracious and effectual as ever;—does not the blame, aye, and worse than blame, does not the guilt of our “weak and sickly” condition rest upon *us*?¹ upon *us*, both minister and people? O, I do assure you that a sense of these things weighs upon my mind; would to God that *you* were alive to and fully sensible of what is incumbent on you as members of Christ's Church! Would that you felt that of yourselves you can do nothing, the Holy Spirit alone being able to breathe life and activity into the deadened and hardened soul. Would that you might be led to beware of the “two evils” of which God Himself has spoken by the mouth of His prophet. The time may come to us, even as it has often to others before, when the Spirit of God will no more strive or plead with us. If we turn away from the Fountain of living waters, and hew out for ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water, God will surely visit us—He will take away our name and place—He will remove our candlestick—and we shall

1) 1 Cor. xi. 30.

grope in darkness and misery. If this seem overcharged, and you feel disposed to think that I speak too strongly, let me beseech you not to be deceived: the history of the Jews, of the Churches of the East, yes, and of many parishes in our own land, utter a warning which none can safely neglect. They tell us, that once the light and comfort of the Holy Spirit were vouchsafed to them, even as they are to us now. Once they drank of the Fountain of living waters; but, having forsaken the Lord, He forsook them; He left them to eat the fruit of their own ways, and to be filled with their own devices. Just so He will do to us, if we turn away from Him; if we seek to draw water from the broken cisterns of worldliness and selfishness. Wherefore we may not be content to remain as we are—we must press forward—we must go to the Fountain of living waters, and satisfy the wants of the soul. Whether as a parish or as a people, we must meditate and pray over our condition as members of the body of Christ; for soon we, who now stand in the Christian ranks, will pass away, and the place which knows us now, this house of God and its blessed privileges, will know us no more for ever; our name and generation will soon be among the things that have been; and when we have gone to our account, what shall be our lot? How shall we give answer for our privileges, blessings, and warnings, if they have been unheeded? Brethren, “be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”¹

1) Gal. vi. 7, 8.

Sexagesima Sunday.

SERMON . VIII.

THE HORRIBLE DOOM OF THE IMPENITENT.

LUKE xiii. 3 and 5.—“ I tell you, nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

AMONG those who were present, on one occasion of our Lord's public teaching, listening to His inspired words, were some who told Him of a recent event which had occurred, when Pilate, the Roman governor, with almost unheard of cruelty, had slaughtered a body of Galileans, engaged in worshipping God, and literally mingled their blood with the blood of the victims which they were sacrificing. Probably they who related these circumstances had some sinister purpose in view, intending (as at other times) if possible, to draw from the Redeemer some expression of opinion which might be turned to His disadvantage, so as either to prejudice the people against Him, or excite the suspicions of the government; and doubtless they supposed that they had involved him in a dilemma from which he could not escape with safety: if He spake favorably or justified the doings of Pilate, it would be easy to stir up the people against Him as one who sided with the Romans against His own countrymen; if He condemned the bloody proceeding of Pilate, it gave them a fair opportunity to denounce the Redeemer to him as a disaffected or seditious person: but however this may be, whatever the intentions or desires of many among the multitude might have been, it is certain that they manifested a censorious and uncharitable spirit in their judgment

respecting those Galileans who had been thus suddenly and fearfully cut off; evidently implying that had not these been most grievous offenders against God, so dire a calamity would never have come upon them. The Saviour's answer is directed to this point, declining to say any thing for or against the actions of Pilate in this particular matter: He rather, with the constant aim and endeavor to benefit His hearers, reproves their harsh judgment; contradicts their common notion that calamitous dispensations are sure marks, in individual cases, of superabounding wickedness and vileness; and warns them to take heed to themselves and to their own condition, lest through their impenitence and hardness of heart, the vengeance of Almighty God be drawn down upon them, and they be cut off in a manner far more fearful, far more horrible than were their brethren in Galilee: "Suppose ye (are His words) that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay;" the inference is unwarrantable; you have no right, from this circumstance alone, to pronounce upon their condition as sinners or otherwise; but this you may learn, this I warn you of, that "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;"—or, to illustrate my meaning by another case which has occurred, as respects "those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay;" there is no ground whatever for thinking thus; the greatness of the calamity affords no certain rule for judging of the greatness or smallness of their offences; but I repeat again the solemn warning to you and to all, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."—There is much in these few words of our Saviour, which may profitably serve as food for sober and frequent meditation and prayer; especially when we consider the circumstances which gave rise to His language, and the solemn earnestness and distinctness with which He twice utters the warning call to repentance and amendment. As His commissioned ambassador, I beseech you to hear the voice of this gracious Saviour who now speaks from heaven

unto you, and to supplicate Him continually to give you an understanding and obedient heart always and in all things; thus shall you receive grace and strength, and unfailing consolation.

It is no unusual thing to find men who have adopted sentiments very similar to those condemned by our Master in the case of the Jews. Many seem to think that here, in this life, is all our heaven and all our hell; that good actions are rewarded and evil actions punished in this world; and that prosperity and success is a mark of God's favor, and tribulation and calamity a sure proof of His anger and displeasure. Nor is it at all uncommon to hear such and such instances adduced and commented upon as direct judgments from God, and the moral condition of individuals argued from the distresses or miseries which have come upon them. The well-meaning but ill-informed friends of the patriarch Job reasoned thus; and because the severest afflictions and the sorest calamities had been sent upon him, they immediately concluded that Job, though apparently an upright man, was in reality a grievous sinner; his misfortunes, to their apprehension, was certain evidence of his sinfulness and unworthiness, and they regarded these as being a just and righteous judgment on account of his offences. In the same way the Jews of our Saviour's day argued: Pilate, with savage cruelty, had slain a body of Galileans, not in ordinary warfare or when occupied in the every day concerns of life, but while engaged in the solemn acts of worship, and while sacrificing at the altar in obedience to God's commands; it was then that the sanguinary Roman came upon them, and their life's-blood flowed forth, mingling with the blood of the sacrificed victims: now, said the Jews, we know that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things; for had they not been great sinners, they would not have been punished so severely; the Lord would have interposed and preserved them; He would have scattered the Roman soldiery as chaff before the wind, and vindicated His honor against the insult put upon His name by the tyrannical usurpers:—

but because He did not interpose and save them, we are sure that their fearful end was only a just judgment against such grievous sinners. Just so, too, those eighteen men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and destroyed them beneath its ruins, were undoubtedly greater sinners than any others that dwelt in Jerusalem at the time, else God would not have caused them thus suddenly to perish, He would not have singled them out for destruction. Now, the men who judged thus respecting others, are not alone in entertaining such views: few perhaps, in these days, since the clearer light of the Gospel has shone upon the world, carry their opinions to the same extent, or are equally positive in particular instances; yet it is certain that the reasoning of men in general on this subject is very fallacious: they assume, as a ground-work, that the things of this life, the good and the ill of existence here, prosperity and adversity, are tests, which can be relied on, of the correctness and value of the principles on which they act. If a man is prospered in worldly matters, if he gets wealth and honors, if he rises above the majority of his race in those respects which are so apt to move their envy and excite secret hostility, if he continue prosperous for many years and enjoys all or nearly all that man can desire in this life, it is at once concluded that his principles are good, not perhaps according to the Scripture standard of good and evil, but good enough for men to act upon in this world, and safe enough for those who are content to live as the rest of mankind live, and to take their chance with the multitude, as far as the world to come is concerned. So, on the other hand, it is very apt to be inferred that the man who is constantly unfortunate and unsuccessful, who is frequently suffering under one calamity or other, and who is poor or in very straitened circumstances, has something entirely wrong about him; and if he is not a vicious man, or if as all acknowledge he is an honest and upright man, still his principles cannot be worth much, since losses and hardships have been the almost unfailing results. In this way men usually argue, and if they see a certain course leading to honor and respec-

tability, they are ready to follow it, carefully avoiding such a course as might injure their worldly prospects, or lower them in the esteem of their fellow men.

Here, let it be observed, that I do not contradict that law of our nature whereby we conclude that virtue is rewarded and vice is punished ; and that a virtuous man, or a man of good principles, is prospered, and a vicious man, or a man of bad principles, meets with losses or misfortunes : it is the abuse, the perversion of this law against which I contend ; it is against the narrow, erroneous view of this law that I now speak ; yea, it is to call the minds of men to what God has revealed in His holy Word on this subject. From it we learn that virtue, or holy obedience, shall be rewarded, and that vice, or impenitence and disobedience, shall be punished. Here, these results may sometimes take place ; His justice and goodness in punishing the guilty and rewarding the obedient, may at times be displayed ; but there is no promise that such shall be the case in this life ; on the contrary, we are expressly told that the righteous shall suffer persecution and great tribulation, and that the wicked may and do prosper and flourish as the green bay tree ; and we are warned against judging from external circumstances alone, or from the temporal condition of men, since nothing can be more fallacious than to judge on such grounds respecting a man's moral and spiritual condition in the sight of God ; wherefore they who judge of themselves or others by such things do most grievously err, not knowing the Scriptures ; and they who suppose that the relations of this world, the various conditions in which men are placed here, will in any wise form a rule of judgment in the last, great day, or who suppose that the high, and lofty, and wealthy of the earth will receive more attention than the poor and the despised among men, when each shall be called upon to give account of his stewardship, are most fatally deceived ; for God is no respecter of persons, but measures out equal justice to all alike.¹ They who believe and do what God requires shall

1) God hath warned us, that the inquiry into every man's conduct will

be accepted in that day, not because of any merit in their obedience to move Him to pardon their manifold shortcomings, but solely through the meritorious sacrifice of Christ on the cross; they who are unbelieving and consequently disobedient shall be condemned by the Judge of quick and dead, because they have despised the riches of His grace, and wilfully and deliberately rebelled against Him, and dishonored and insulted His holy name and His Word; and all this shall take place without regard being had to their greatness or littleness in this world, or to their prosperity or adversity in temporal matters.

Hence it is, that laying aside, and forgetting as much as may be, those distinctions by which the world is so much influenced in their estimate of one another, the solemn and twice repeated warning of our Master in the text ought to be written in living characters on our hearts and consciences: "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Yes, verily, except we repent and do works meet for repentance, we shall certainly perish for ever: no matter what our worldly condition may be, however highly favored or happy, however free from corroding care and anxiety, however full of blessings, it will not exempt us from repentance, it will not aid us toward eternal salvation except we repent; yea, and to the comfort of every one who is poor and distressed, or miserable and needy, or persecuted and cast

be public, Christ Himself the Judge, the whole race of man, and the whole angelic host, spectators of the awful scene. Before that assembly every man's good deeds will be declared, and his most secret sins disclosed. As no elevation of rank will then give a title to respect, no obscurity of condition shall exclude the just from public honor, or screen the guilty from public shame. Opulence will find itself no longer powerful; poverty will be no longer weak; birth will be no longer distinguished; meanness will no longer pass unnoticed. The rich and poor will indeed strangely meet together; when all the inequalities of the present life shall disappear, and the conqueror and his captive—the monarch and his subject—the lord and his vassal—the statesman and the peasant—the philosopher and the unlettered hind—shall find their distinctions to have been mere illusions. The characters and actions of the greatest and the meanest, have in truth been equally important and equally public; while the eye of the Omniscient God hath been equally upon them all,—while all are at last equally brought to answer to their common Judge, and the angels stand around spectators, equally interested in the dooms of all.—*BP. HORSLEY'S Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 31.

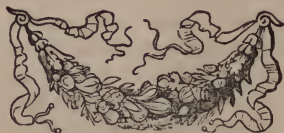
down by reason of the heavy and mysterious dispensations of God's providence, to the comfort of every such one and of every other who has been led to feel that earth is not the final abiding-place of man, be it spoken, that notwithstanding all that may occur here, his repentance shall in no wise lose its reward in the world to come ; it shall minister grace and strength to his soul here, and make him meet for acceptance in the Beloved hereafter. But except we repent, unless we have a hearty sorrow for our manifold sins by thought, word, and deed, and unless we strive in faith and in the strength of the Holy Ghost to forsake sin utterly and to follow hard after righteousness, we shall perish in our sins for ever and ever. Nothing else will avail us ; in no other way, by no other means can we obtain safety ; the Redeemer Himself has said, that we shall be everlastingly ruined if we repent not ; He whose mercy and compassion are infinite, He who willeth not that the sinner die in his sin and be lost, He who humbled Himself, O how low, even to die on the cross for all mankind, in order that through Him all might live and be saved, He has said, except ye repent, ye shall perish ; there is no mercy or favor for us at His hands, except through penitence and faith ; there is no value to our souls in His atoning sacrifice except through genuine repentance on our part ; there is no pardon at God's hands, there is no release from fear, no deliverance from the burden of sin, no room for hope, no solid peace, unless our souls be humbled at the foot of the cross with a realizing sense of the greatness of our sins and rebellion, and unless thus humbled, thus made to know how loathsome sin must be which required no less a sacrifice than the Son of God, we cry mightily to God to cleanse us from our sins in the blood of the Lamb, and to give us grace and strength to lead a new and holy life.

Let the impenitent and the hardened weigh well so solemn a declaration as this of the Lord Jesus ; one, too, so plain and fraught with consequences so momentous : "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," were the fearful words of our Master to the unbelieving Jews ; and

do ye not know how exactly His words were accomplished ? can the horrors of that scene ever be forgotten, when the Roman eagle lighted upon his prey ; when the myriads which came to Jerusalem, the devoted city, in her last days, to sacrifice at the altar of God, were slaughtered like the beasts of the field, and their blood mingled in one common stream with the blood of their offerings on the altar ?—O why, then, since the truth of God's Word is eternal and immutable, and sooner or later fulfilled to the uttermost, why should the impenitent man be deceived by the lying vanities of sin and Satan ? why should he delude himself with the hope of escape in any other way save that pointed out by the Omniscient and Omnipotent Saviour ? why should he die for ever when life and eternal joy is so freely offered for his acceptance ? why should he lie down in the devouring fire, or dwell with everlasting burnings, when the Lord Jesus calls him to rise to heaven, and enjoy unending felicity ? Surely "it concerns all them who are in the neighborhood and fringes of the flames of hell, that is in a state of sin, quickly to arise from the danger and shake the burning coals off our flesh, lest it consume the marrow and the bones. 'No man,' saith St. Cyprian, 'is safe long that is so near to danger ;' for suddenly the change will come in which the judge shall be called to judgment, and no man to plead for him, unless a good conscience be his advocate ; and the rich shall be naked as a condemned criminal to execution ; and there shall be no regard of princes or of nobles, and the differences of men's account shall be forgotten, and no distinction remaining but of good or bad, sheep and goats, blessed and accursed souls." "The evil fall into an accursed portion because they despised that which God most loves, His Son and His mercies, His graces and His Holy Spirit ; and they that do all this, have cause to complain of nothing but their own follies : and they shall feel the accursed consequents then, when they shall see the Judge sit above them, angry and severe, inexorable and terrible ; under them an intolerable hell ; within them their consciences clamorous and diseased ; without them all the world on fire ;

on the right hand those men glorified whom they persecuted or despised ; on the left hand the devils accusing ; for this is the day of the Lord's terror, and who is able to abide it ?"¹ O, then, may God grant to you, to me, and to all true and genuine repentance, both now and ever ; that so we may be pardoned, and being faithful unto death, striving against sin, we may be saved eternally in Christ : thus shall we have peace and joy in believing while yet we are in the world, and shall be heirs of that unspeakable glory and bliss, when faith and hope shall be lost in reality, and naught but pure and perfect love prevail throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

1) BP. JEREMY TAYLOR's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 630, 31. London Ed., 1836, 3 vols.



Quinquagesima Sunday.

SERMON IX.

THE TESTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF SIN.

1 JOHN iii. 7, 8.—“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.”

THERE is a plainness and distinctness in many portions, especially the preceptive portions of Holy Writ, which may, perhaps, seem to render in great measure needless the efforts of the ministry of reconciliation, who make them the subjects of discourse in the public preaching of the Gospel; and indeed were it thought that revelation could be improved upon, were it attempted to set forth more plainly or more clearly the mind of the Spirit in passages like the text; that is, I mean, were it attempted to render more comprehensible what is expressed in the simplest and most intelligible terms, there would be force in the objection, there would be reason in the supposition, that sometimes at least the counsel of the Lord is darkened by words,¹ many in number it may be, but to little real profit. Yet, let it not be thought that this remark tends to detract in any wise from the important object had in view in bringing plain, and clear, and pointed precepts and warnings before a Christian congregation, and in dwelling upon their evident clearness and distinctness; for nothing in truth is farther from my intention in what has been

1) Job xxxviii. 2.

said. It is not enough (as experience shows) that Holy Scripture be in general so plain that it is almost impossible for the diligent and docile reader to err in the understanding of it, or at least of the fundamental truths contained in it; it is not enough (as Apostolic practice demonstrates) that the Holy Ghost, speaking by the mouth of prophets, evangelists, and Apostles, has caused to be recorded in His Word all things necessary for the salvation of mankind: I say (with due reverence, it is trusted) that this is not enough; for if it were, what need of the ministry of Christ to preach the Gospel, to read it in your ears, to explain, enforce, and continually beseech you to hear it? or why did the Apostles, long before were committed to writing the books of the New Testament, spend months and years in teaching and preaching the truths of Christianity? and why did and does the Church give all diligence to promote sound instruction by every effort in her power, so that the Gospel may produce its intended effect? Surely, then, it is well, nay more, it is very necessary that we who are sent by the Master Himself to preach His blessed Gospel, should bring before you time after time, the plain and positive commands of God in all things affecting your spiritual interests, and should, as it were, by moral suasion, compel you to think how inexcusable you are when you know what is right and yet do what is wrong; to reflect how grievous is the guilt and how sore is the punishment of turning away from Him that speaketh from heaven, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace. Hence it is that I shall not attempt at this time to do any thing more than to urge upon you the manifest sense of the Apostle's words, knowing that there can hardly remain a doubt in your minds as to what they mean and what they require.

"Little children, (says the aged Apostle, using that term of affection in which he so much delights,) let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He (the Lord and Master) is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." He that leads a Christian life is a Christian most certainly, and is of God; he that commits sin know-

ingly, habitually, or wilfully, is of the devil just as certainly : and inasmuch as Holy Scripture recognizes only two classes of men, the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the servants of God and the servants of the devil, it is a perfectly plain thing, that we and all belong to one or the other class; we either do righteousness, and are therefore righteous, or we commit sin, and are therefore of the devil.¹ Different degrees of goodness there are as well as of evil; the good are not all equally good, (would to God that they were!) neither are the bad all equally bad (no, God forbid); but let it be remembered, that in the Word of Inspiration they are denominated righteous who repent, believe, and obey, though their penitence may not be as deep as it ought to be, their faith may be weak, and their obedience somewhat short of the whole-souled obedience which others yield; and they are denominated unrighteous who do not repent or realize that they are sinners, who do not possess or seek for genuine faith in Christ the Redeemer of mankind, and who do not strive to lead a holy and consistent Christian life; though in other respects, as far as the world sees, they may

1) Men are not masters of themselves. Led they must be, either by the spirit and powers of darkness, or by the Spirit of God. It is for this reason that God, for Christ's sake, has given us the earnest of His Spirit in baptism; with this assurance, that he who submits to be governed by His Spirit, and brings forth fruit worthy of such a favor, he shall still have greater favors conferred upon him; but he that is not careful to improve the graces God gives him, from him shall be taken away even what was before bestowed upon him. Now if men, notwithstanding this caution given them, will be making experiments how far they may neglect their duty, without losing the earnest of God's Spirit;—if they will try to govern themselves by their own reason and wisdom, laying aside the laws of God;—why, then, they may indeed take themselves from under God's oversight and direction; but servants still they must be, and led they must be, by the spirit and powers of darkness; they only change masters (for a master they must have), and how much for the worse, sad experience will show! It is for this reason that humility, and care, and watchfulness, are so much recommended in Scripture, lest Christians should grow conceited of their own wisdom and ability to govern themselves; lest they should neglect the means of grace which God has already given them; and lest, being often off their guard, the devil should at last be permitted to take them into his kingdom and service; from whence they cannot return to God when they please, no more than a dead man can return to life by his own power.—BP. THOMAS WILSON'S *Sermon on Rom. viii. 14.*

be worthy of every commendation, may be honest, upright, and virtuous, and no more guilty of gross sins and crimes than they are who believe in the Saviour and obey His commands. It is not supposed that many in this parish (if indeed there be one) have attained to the faith and holiness of Apostles and martyrs; yet we cannot reasonably doubt that they will, some of them, if not many, be saved through Christ by the faith which they have or may attain in His atoning sacrifice; neither is it supposed, on the other hand, that any of this congregation are sunk so low in the depths of iniquity as to be murderers, or scorers, or blasphemers; yet every unrighteous man here present, excelling in moral virtues though he may be, is and must be devoid of well-grounded hope of eternal life; yea, if he die as he is, impenitent and unbelieving, is as certainly lost for ever as though the mark of Cain were on his brow, or the devilish spirit of Voltaire and others were all his own. Utterly repudiating, therefore, the anti-scriptural notion of any neutral ground, any middle position, in which a man is too good to be ranked with the unrighteous and unbelieving, and yet hardly good enough to claim a place among the righteous; or in which he fancies his neglect of steady obedience to God is no proof of his serving the devil;—repudiating and condemning this notion, as we must if Holy Scripture be our rule and guide, let me pray you to ask yourselves where you stand? to which class you belong? let no man deceive you; nay, be undeceived if you are laboring under the delusion which I fear many of you are: you know the test, he that doeth righteousness is righteous; what are you when tested thus? or you know the other test, he that committeth sin is of the devil; if this be the standard, whose servants are ye?¹ The beloved disciple, speaking by inspiration,

1) I before observed, that to be drawn of God and to be willing to do His will, are one and the same thing; if so, then all who do the will of God are drawn of God; and all who are effectually drawn of God, do His will. From whence it follows, that all who live virtuously and holily have the Spirit of God, and all who do wickedly are of their father the devil. From whence it follows, that it is a vain and ill-grounded confidence that some men have in their spirit-

says to you and to me what we both well understand, the Christian's life is the proof of the Christian's faith. Does a man give heed to his soul's concerns? does he pray for grace and light? does he read and study his Bible, prayerfully and constantly? does he strive to know from it what he ought to do, and how he ought to act? is he careful to maintain good works? is his affection set on things above? does he love the holy, humble, self-denying, self-mortifying doctrines of the Gospel, and does he strive to carry them out honestly and faithfully into practice? does he appreciate the divinely appointed means of grace in the Church of God, especially the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper? and does he use these means, as Christ Jesus, our Master, commands, believing that if he come in a worthy manner he shall certainly receive grace and strength? Do we see a man thus living, thus seeking to make full proof of the faith which works by love and purifies the heart? thus seeking to maintain union and communion with the one Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, of which he was made a member by Holy Baptism? then we see a righteous man; we have a living exemplification of the power and the truth of the Gospel; we have infallible evidence that faith in the atoning blood of the Divine Saviour does procure for man remission of sins, does draw down upon him the rich blessings of joy and peace in believing, does obtain the promised enlightening and grace of the Holy Ghost, and does confirm his right and title to eternal life.—I speak not now of the many infirmities and short-comings which find place among Christians; alas, they are at times many and grievous; who can tell how oft he offendeth? who can count the number of his secret faults? who can estimate the extent of his infirmities, his offences of temper, of thought, word, and deed? Ah, the Christian, renewed by the Spirit of God, hating sin and striving after holiness, does sometimes sin

ual attainments whilst they work the works of darkness: for he only that doeth the works of the Spirit hath the Spirit of God; and hereby do we know that we love Him, if we keep His commandments,—*BP. SHERLOCK'S Works*, Vol. I, p. 308.

against God, and is obliged to acknowledge and bewail his manifold offences; nevertheless, the Christian does not sin wilfully and habitually; he does not make a practice of offending in one or two things, knowing them to be contrary to the law of God; his heart's desire, his daily prayer, his constant effort, is to know and to do the will of God in all things. David was indeed a grievous sinner on several occasions, yet he was, too, an eminent saint; deep was his repentance, sincere was his faith, hearty was his obedience: and so is it with every other righteous man; the habit of his life is to do righteousness, and he tries to do it, in the strength of the Spirit, with all his energies of soul and body. Wherefore he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as the Lord and Master of us all who did righteousness in the days of His flesh is righteous.

Look now at the other side, and it will be seen that the want of Christian faith is a sure proof of an unchristian life. Does a man follow the bent of his natural inclination—go wherever it leads him, and do whatever it prompts him? does he love this world, and are his affections centred here upon its delights, its enjoyments, its hopes? is he a prayerless man? are the Scriptures unread, unstudied by him? are its truths and requirements disbelieved and without effect upon him? is his heart unchanged, cold and dead to spiritual things? and are the services of Christ's Church, the blessed privileges of the ministry, worship, doctrine, and sacraments of the body of Christ, unmeaning, useless things, having no power to touch his heart or give him light and comfort? In short, does a man rest easy in a course of conduct which the Scriptures pointedly condemn, or which is in direct opposition to the principles of the Gospel? then we see one who St. John says, "is of the devil." It is not my saying: it is the infallible record of the Holy Spirit which speaks thus plainly. He declares that the man who leads an unchristian life is not of God, but is of the devil; because he works not the work of God, but acts on the principles and does the works of the great adversary of mankind.—It is to no purpose to say here (as some may and

will) that worldly men often display moral virtues and excellencies. It is in vain to object against what has been said, by claiming for those who are no Christians, or shamefully inconsistent Christians, the possession of many commendable feelings and principles, or the performance of many honorable, upright, benevolent, and praiseworthy actions. Doubtless, the man of the world, living in a Christian land, and insensibly to himself influenced by the principles and prevailing spirit of the Gospel, does do many things which in themselves are really Christian virtues and actions. He may be liberal and patriotic, temperate and honest, kind and beneficent; yea, he may (to the shame of Christians be it said), he may surpass in many respects the children of light: but yet, true though all this may be, he is not a righteous man. The good acts which he does, the good dispositions which he possesses, the excellent spirit which he manifests, all combined, cannot supply the want of what he has not. The actions, good in themselves, which he performs, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, and are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, are not pleasant or acceptable unto God; and he himself still belongs to the class of those who, the Holy Spirit declares, are "of the devil."

Now, my brethren, with these brief remarks on a very plain passage of Holy Writ, I appeal to you as reasonable and reasoning beings. I call upon you to think how distinctly the condemnation of every man who commits sin is written by the finger of God in His holy Word. And who that possesses common intelligence can doubt for a moment that such a man is utterly inexcusable, and liable to the sorest punishment for wilful contempt or disregard of the holiness, purity, self-denial, humility, and constancy of Christ's Gospel? Who can believe that any plea can be offered which will in the least help the man who, knowing what God declares to be right, chooses nevertheless to do what is wrong? Who in this assembly is so ignorant or so blind, as not to know and see that the righteous man must live righteously and godly in this present world; and that if he come not up to this, he

shall certainly perish in his sins? Surely, you will not trust in any of the lying vanities of the devil; you will not lean on any of the broken reeds which may pierce you with sorrows unnumbered and unending. O no: let us hope better things: let us hope you will be men of prayer; that the Holy Spirit will touch your hearts and quicken them into light and life; and that you will be humble, teachable, obedient, willing servants of Him who has grafted you into His body, the Church. Let us hope, let us pray, (as indeed we do,) that God will open your eyes and make you to see yourselves as you are, sinners, and lost, except by faith in the atonement you lay hold upon eternal life; and let us take home with us, in our heart of hearts, that there is only one way in which we can show that we love God, viz. when we keep His commandments.¹ "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."²

1) 1 Jno. v. 3.

2) Jno. xiv. 21.



Ash-Wednesday.

SERMON X.

THE NATURE AND BENEFITS OF FASTING.

JOEL ii. 15.—“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly.”

THE prophet Joel flourished probably not very long before the Babylonish Captivity: this sad event occurred about six hundred years before the advent of our Saviour, and lasted, according to the prediction of God by the mouth of His prophets, seventy years; after which the remnant of Judah were permitted, by a decree of Cyrus the Great, to return and dwell again in their own land.¹ This prophet and the many others whose prophecies have been transmitted to us, were sent, in mercy and compassion, to warn the rebellious people of God of the dread consequences of their wickedness, and to urge them to flee from the wrath to come—“the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age: He gave them all into his hand. And

1) See DEAN PRIDEAUX'S *Connexion*, &c. Vol. I. p. 99, 103, 116, etc.

all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword, carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil three-score and ten years."¹ It was in mercy (as I have said) that the Lord was pleased to bear thus long with His stiff-necked and rebellious people; it was in the fulness of His Divine compassion, that for hundreds of years, while the chosen people were becoming more and more corrupt, and more and more eager after the abominations of the heathen, He caused His prophets to raise aloud the warning voice, and to proclaim distinctly to all the fearful judgments which await every impenitent and sinful nation. And it may also be regarded as a signal mark of the long suffering and goodness of God toward us of this land, that the "sure word of prophecy" remains with us to this day, to teach us what shall be the end of this nation, if it forsake not idolatry and wickedness, now that the manifold wisdom and mercy of God are made known unto us by His Church, the living and perpetual Witness against the sins of the world.

In the humble hope of deepening the solemn impressions which this day of fasting, the beginning of Lent, naturally forces upon our minds, I pray you to give good heed to the earnest warnings and pleadings of the prophet Joel, to reflect how great must have been the wickedness of that people to whom he was sent, and to lay to heart the remedies which he proposes for putting an end to the pestilence of sin and corruption which raged throughout the

whole land. "Blow the trumpet in Zion (are his importunate words), sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God?"

But why, or for what ought *we* to fast and give ourselves unto humiliation and prayer? Why is it incumbent on *us* to humble ourselves to the dust, and to cry aloud unto God to spare us and to save us for our Redeemer's sake? I will tell you most plainly: we ought to "sanctify a fast," because of our sins, public and private; our sins as a nation, and as individuals; these have separated between us and our God; against these are His judgments denounced, and for these, if unrepented of, we shall as surely be punished as were the Jews of the prophet's day. No one can look abroad over the face of this fair and fertile land, and note the tempers, and dispositions, and habits, of the millions which people it, without being struck by the active and restless spirit which pervades all classes in the community: no one can well fail to see that there is a great deal of jarring and contention, of strife and debate, of ambition and deceit, of pride and vanity; yea, and worse than this, that devilish lusts and desires, fierce and savage murders, and the most disgusting impiety and outrage, too often find place within our borders. No man, who calls himself a Christian, and feels as a Christian ought to feel, can look upon the open profligacy and crime which are tolerated, and even praised by many, without involuntarily shuddering at the awful, unimaginable amount of *secret* vice and corruption which is in existence. Who can tell of the gross sensuality and wickedness of multitudes, who sin greedily enough if they can hide it from the gaze of their fellow-men? Who can penetrate into the secret recesses and retirements, and lay

open to the view the idolatry of the miser, heaping up and gloating over the perishing dross of earth ; the beastly indulgence of the glutton and the drunkard, burying and drowning the soul in the depraved appetites and passions of a diseased body ; the cold-blooded calculations of the man who is determined to dip his hand in his brother's blood ; the low and despicable vices and pleasures of the ignorant, cruel, and degraded ? Who, I say, can estimate and disclose to our view these, and the countless varieties of these and other secret sins ? And yet, who does not know that they exist to a fearful extent in almost every part of this nation ? Ah, what Christian can remember, without fear and trembling, that all our secret sins, by thought, word, and deed, are set in the light of the countenance of Jehovah, the great and terrible Lord, the just and holy God Almighty ? I would to God, that He would send His Spirit to strike conviction upon our hearts of the enormity of our sins and offences against Him. I would that He would enable us to see ourselves as we are, and to realize how grievous are the vices and corruptions of this hypocritical and boastful age. No language of mine, or of any other man, can convey any thing of an adequate idea of these things ; for it is (as St. Paul declares) a shame even to speak of those things which are done amongst us ; therefore, it would be to little profit to seek to work up a highly-wrought description of what can never be depicted in words, of what imagination can only give us a faint glimpse. I would that God would give us here to feel to what an extent wickedness prevails in this village, and especially of our own share in it. Would that He would make us to know that our example is not what it ought to be, our influence much less for good than it might be, and that our partaking of other men's sins is a stain upon our Christian character and profession. Would that we were alive to these things as we ought to be, and that we were duly sensible of the open and secret sins which find place amongst ourselves ; of the coldness and deadness, the worldliness and vanity, the violations of the Lord's Day, and the mere form of godliness without the power thereof, which

are all too observable in this parish. If we were duly sensible of our real condition ; if we knew and felt how many and how grievous are our sins, we should be not only ready but glad to humble ourselves with fasting and with prayer : we should be not only willing, but anxious to assemble in this house of the Lord, to offer up our united supplications for mercy ;¹ we should weep between the porch and the altar, with the priests, the ministers of the Lord, and say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thy heritage to reproach ; and we should know and perceive aright, why or for what *we* ought to fast,—even on account of our daily and hourly sins, which, if unrepented of and unforgiven, shall draw down upon us the sure vengeance of God, who is “a consuming fire.”

There being, then, these cogent and ever present reasons why we ought to give ourselves to fasting, humiliation, and prayer, it becomes very needful to inquire *what fasting is*,

1) The very purpose of the Church of God, both in the number and in the order of her fasts, hath been not only to preserve thereby throughout all ages the remembrance of miseries heretofore sustained, and of the causes in ourselves out of which they have arisen, that men considering the one might fear the other the more, but farther also to temper the mind, lest contrary affections coming in place should make it too profuse and dissolute, in which respect it seemeth that fasts have been set as ushers of festival days for prevention of those disorders as much as might be, wherein, notwithstanding the world always will deserve, as it hath done, blame, because such evils being not possible to be rooted out, the most we can do is in keeping them low ; and (which is chiefly the fruit we look for) to create in the minds of men a love towards frugal and severe life, to undermine the palaces of wantonness, to plant parsimony as nature where riotousness hath been study, to harden whom pleasure would melt, and to help the tumors which always fulness breedeth, that children as it were in the wool of their infancy dyed with hardness may never afterwards change color ; that the poor whose perpetual fasts are necessity, may with better contentment endure the hunger which virtue causeth others so often to choose, and by advice of religion itself so far to esteem above the contrary ; that they which for the most part do lead sensual and easy lives, they which, as the prophet David describeth them, “are not plagued like other men,” (Ps. lxxiii. 5,) may by the public spectacle of all be still put in mind what themselves are ; finally, that every man may be every man’s daily guide and example, as well by fasting to declare humility as by praise to express joy in the sight of God, although it have herein befallen the Church as sometimes David, so that the speech of the one may be truly the voice of the other, “my soul fasted, and even that was also turned to my reproof” (Ps. lxxix. 10.).—HOOKER’S *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. ch. lxxii. § 18.

or *in what it consists*? Holy Scripture, though abounding in exhortations respecting this discipline of soul and body, does not give us any precise statement as to wherein it consists. Our blessed Saviour, however, has left us directions on this subject;¹ and we have recorded for our instruction the examples of holy men in all ages,² who chastened themselves by fasting and watching unto prayer: the Church, too, in appointing "days of fasting and abstinence through the whole year," has declared that on these days, and during these seasons, she "requires such a measure of abstinence as is more especially suited to extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion." The Church does not define fasting to be mere abstinence from food; neither does she allow us to suppose that abstinence has little or nothing to do with it, or is not essentially needful to fasting. So far from this, she declares that abstinence is necessary, but only necessary because of its being a suitable preparation for, and meet accompaniment unto, extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion. It were a grievous mistake to run into, to think with many, that simply abstaining from food, or from one kind of food till a later period in the day than usual, comprises all that is meant by fasting; while at the same time their pleasures are not diminished, their desires not lessened, their hearts not humbled, their sense of the deceitfulness and enormity of sin in no way increased. On the other hand, it is a very sad error, to suppose that the body is not to be deprived of some of its accustomed enjoyments and pleasures, that it is not to be chastened and kept in subjection as it was by St. Paul, but that it may safely be pampered and pleased, or be allowed to have all and more than it craves, and still not interfere very materially with our endeavors after an humble and prayerful frame of mind. No, my brethren, we are to take care to avoid both extremes; our fasting ought to consist in abstaining from what we can abstain from without injuring our bodily health; in laying aside some of the

1) Matt. vi. 16 18.

2) See Ps. lxi. 10; Dan. ix. 3; Luke ii. 37; Acts x. 30; Acts xiii. 2; 2 Cor. vi. 5; xi. 27; 1 Cor. ix. 27.

luxuries which can easily be dispensed with if we are in earnest; or in giving up some of the favorite articles of food with which our tables are daily spread. Neither must we forget to diminish the quantity usually required; to have more plainness and simplicity than customary, and to deny ourselves, according as we are able, and as we feel and see that there is need of humbling ourselves before God.¹ But it is ever to be remembered that we are not to rest here; our flesh is to be subdued to the Spirit; our abstinence is to minister to our greater devotion, and to enable us to be more liberal and charitable to the poor and distressed, and to give more of our substance for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom. We are to take good heed that what the Lord says by His prophet be not applicable to us: "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure and exact all your labors. Behold ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high." Yes, and we are to note carefully the description which the Lord Himself gives of a counterfeit and worthless, and of a true and proper fast:—"Is this (of which He has just spoken), is this such a fast as I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free;

1) By this (i. e. fasting) is not meant merely a change in the kind of our meats, or in the usual time of taking them, not acquitting gross for delicious though less nourishing, which is but a more refined luxury. But it is a denying ourselves in the quantity and quality of our refreshments; departing from the usual comforts and hours of receiving them, in such manner as may be a real punishment and humiliation to the body and its appetites; and answer to the true import of those phrases in Scripture, which call it an "afflicting," an "humbling," a "chastening of the soul," which join it with "sackcloth and ashes," and "earth on the head," and every the most significant test of bitterness and dejection of spirit. (Is. lviii. 5; Ps. xxxv. 13; lxix. 10; Nehem. ix. 1.)—Abstinence or fasting is a help to and instrument of repentance; and only so far of any consideration with God and wise men, as it contributes to spiritual and purposes.—DEAN STANHOPE *On the Epistles and Gospels*, Vol. II. p. 300.

and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"¹

In our observance, then, of this solemn season of Lent, let us be careful to make it a season of true fasting, humiliation, and prayer, by abstaining from sin especially, and even from allowable enjoyments and pleasures, and by greater devotion to the service of God, and more earnest supplication for mercy through the Redeemer's merits and intercession.² Let us "Turn unto the Lord with all our heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend our heart and not our garments, and turn unto the Lord our God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord our God?"³ Let us remember, in the words of our Homily, that "there be three ends whereunto if our fast be directed, it is then a work profitable to us, and accepted of God. The first is, to chastise the flesh, that it be not too wanton, but tamed and brought in subjection to the Spirit:—the second, that the spirit may be more earnest and fervent to prayer:—the third, that our fast be a testimony and witness with us before God, of our humble submission to His high Majesty, when we confess and acknowledge our sins

1) Isaiah lviii. 3-7.

2) How is a day of fasting to be observed by serious Christians? Not only by interrupting and abridging the care of our bodily sustenance, but by carefully inquiring into the state of our souls; charging ourselves with all those transgressions which we have committed against God's laws, humbly confessing them with shame and confusion of face, with hearty contrition and sorrow for them; deprecating God's displeasure, and begging Him to turn away His anger from us: by interceding with him for such spiritual and temporal blessings upon ourselves and others as are needful and convenient: by improving our knowledge in all the particulars of our duty: by relieving the wants and necessities of the poor, that our humiliation and prayers may find acceptance with God: and if the fast be public, by attending the public places of God's worship.—*Br. Hobart's Nelson's Festivals and Fasts*, p. 71.

3) Joel ii. 12-14.

unto Him, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, bewailing the same in the affliction of our bodies.”¹ Seeking these ends with hearty purpose of amendment, with sincere desires and endeavors to grow in grace, we have the faithful promise on which to rest, viz. that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.

1) HOMILY *On Fasting*, p. 239. Am. Ed., 1815.



Lent.

SERMON XI.

FLESHLY-MINDEDNESS.

ROM. viii. 6.—“To be carnally minded is death.”

THE Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans contains some things which are among those characterized by St. Peter as “hard to be understood.” The true and exact signification of various passages is involved in no little difficulty; and it is certain that at times they have been wrested from their just and proper connection, to support schemes of doctrine which are undoubtedly at variance with the specific object the Apostle had in view in this Epistle, with the general and evident tenor of Holy Scripture, and with that “most holy faith” ever held by “the Church of the living God.” In truth, the tendency is, and has always been, to seize upon some one or two or more isolated texts or passages of Scripture, and insist upon them, to the practical exclusion of every thing else; to fix upon these a meaning which alone and apart from the rest of God’s holy Word they might indeed bear; and then confidently to assert that all other portions of Holy Writ must bend to the scheme or plan intended to be supported by the assumed sense of these few passages. I need hardly say to what extravagant lengths men have gone under the influence of strong prejudices and erroneous teaching; and it would be lamentable to dwell upon the abundant instances of the thorough, practical contempt for the Word of God, which are supplied by the history of the progress and fluctuations of religious opinions, during the

past, and at the present time. Let me, rather, as being more in accordance with the subject brought to our notice by the text, and with the present solemn season of Lent, urge upon those who now hear me, the need of humility and a teachable spirit in seeking after truth. You must be willing and glad to learn in the way which God has appointed for us, viz. by the ministry, worship, and sacraments of His Church; you must forbear to set up your own wisdom or your own private conceptions or fancies in opposition to the wisdom of all ages, and the constant testimony and teaching of the Church of the living God; and you must never forget, that the Holy Spirit alone can guide us to such an understanding and give us such knowledge of His truth, as will avail to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Nothing doubting but that you possess a docile spirit and temper, and are sincerely desirous to learn your Master's will as taught in Holy Scripture, let me endeavor to further an end so desirable, by pressing upon your consideration the true meaning and consequences of St. Paul's language when he says, "to be carnally minded is death."

What is this "carnal mind" of which the Apostle is speaking? how does it manifest itself? what are its characteristics? and who are they to whom the description of "minding the flesh" is applied in the Word of God? I doubt not it is easy enough to ascertain, if we search the Scriptures diligently and prayerfully; for in them we learn that "they that are after (or walk according to) the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh." "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." "What fruit had ye then (when ye were the servants of sin) in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." "The wages of sin is death." "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Thus, as we see, the fleshly mind is that which

is entirely engrossed in this world and its affairs. It manifests itself in the all-absorbing interest which it takes in whatever can gratify the fleshly propensities or desires; in the inordinate love of wealth, or honor, or fame; in the eager seeking after the pleasures of sense, or the higher pleasures which a cultivated intellect affords; and in its grosser form, in the low, grovelling, disgusting pleasures of the debauchee, the gambler, or the drunkard. The carnal mind characterizes the man whose god is this world, whose hopes are bounded by this little sphere of earth, and whose expectations reach not beyond the brief span of human life. To such a man, there being naught but undefined, undefinable terror beyond the grave, death is full of gloomy horrors; and there is at times a fearful looking-for of judgment. The carnal mind is, also, radically and essentially at enmity with God; it rises in opposition to His holy will and commandments; it neither loves, nor desires to love, the purity, the self-denial, the humility, and the excellence of the Gospel; its ends and aims are directly the opposite; it dislikes to hear the plain and pointed preaching of the cross, which tears away the veil that covers its loathsome deformity; and it not unfrequently leads men to break out into violent, cordial hatred of the searching and holy law of God. It is neither in subjection to this law, nor indeed can it be, while it continues as it is. More frequently, however, the carnal mind displays itself in a less openly offensive form; viz., by thoroughly saturating its possessor in worldliness and spiritual deadness; by breeding in him a sort of self-satisfaction with his own ways and his own thoughts; and by leading him to rest in slothful continuance in some lifeless, spiritless routine, which he would persuade himself is religion enough for his purpose.

I am fearful, my brethren, lest these truths, momentous and plainly stated as they are, may not make that impression on your hearts and consciences which they ought to do; and for this reason: there is too much fleshly-mindedness in this parish. There are too many who have not yet determined whether they will serve God or mammon;

while their daily life is in contempt of the most holy law of God their Saviour. There are too many who are in that quiet, easy, indifferent state, in which they are neither led to any great excess of evil, nor induced to take up the cross manfully before the world. There are too many who are like those in the ancient churches of Sardis and Laodicea, of whom the Lord Jesus Himself says, that they "have a name to live and are dead;" and of whom He declares that because they are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, He will "spew them out of His mouth." Too many there are, here, as well as elsewhere, who say, "we are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Therefore it is I am fearful for your sakes; and because of these things it is that I fear the Gospel news may fall as unmeaningly on your ears as ever; and that you may persuade yourselves that you are not "carnally minded," seeing you are neither thieves, nor liars, nor drunkards; while at the same time you may be as far as any of these from the kingdom of God. Take warning, then, against the suggestions of the devil; try yourselves not by any human standard, but by the rule of the Gospel as plainly declared unto you in the Church. Be not content because you are better in some or many respects than your neighbor; but see if you come up to the standard of Gospel truth and excellence. Be well assured that if you have not the penitence, the faith, and the obedience therein required of every living soul, your superiority to this man or that man will be of no sort of avail to you. You cannot get to heaven by being moral, virtuous men, if that be all.¹ You can-

1) The natural man's desires of heaven, are not desires of heaven; his faith, no faith; his believing of the Scriptures, infidelity; because he doth not apply them particularly to himself to obey them. In sum, when he prays, hopes, or gives alms, he does somewhat indeed, and it is well done of him; but he doth not truly either pray, or hope, or give alms; there is some carnality in them that hath poisoned them, and quite altered the complexion, constitution, and inward qualities of the work. * * If (then) the grounds of our best duties, that which moves us in our holiest actions, be found upon search to be but carnal; if a careful religious education, custom of the place which we live in, fear of human laws, nay, perhaps, a good soft tender disposition, and the like,

not get there except you be washed in the blood of the Lamb; and that blood which was shed for you and for every one, can be of no service to you, except it be applied to your hearts by faith in Him, except you come and confess that you are miserable sinners, helpless and lost, without the crucified Redeemer.

There is, however, another consideration to which we shall do well to give good heed, and that is, to the sentence of condemnation pronounced against the "minding of the flesh." "To be carnally minded," says the Apostle in the text, "is death;" and "if ye live after the flesh ye shall die." The death here spoken of is not simply the death of the body. It is something more than the separation of soul and body, which separation must take place in the case of each and every one of us, whether good or bad, whether saved or lost. Yea, the death here spoken of is a never-ending death; the bare mention of which, methinks, should startle the sinner from his perilous slumbers, and cause him to flee for his life from the abominations and defilements of sin and Satan.

"There is a death, whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath:
O what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death!"

To be carnally minded leads most certainly to this death; for the man who dies in this condition, who leaves the world unchanged, dies, even as he has lived, at enmity with God; and he who goes down to the grave at enmity with God, must for ever continue so, seeing that as the tree falleth so

be the things that make thee love God, and perform holy duties, and not any inward principle of sanctity within thee, I counsel thee to think better of thine estate, and consider whether the like motives, had it so happened that thou hadst been born and brought up in Turkey, might not have made thee worship Mahomet. I would be sorry to be rigid; I fear thou wilt find they might. Well, then, a new course must be taken; all thy former heathen, carnal, or at best, good moral life; all thy formal performances, the best of thy natural desires, must be content to be ranked here with circumcision and uncircumcision, availing nothing; there is no trust or confidence to be placed on these Egyptian staves of reed, (Is. xxxvi. 6.)—DR. HAMMOND, *Sermon on Gal. vi. 15.*

shall it lie, and that "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" to which we are all rapidly hastening. Even as far as this life is concerned, the carnal-minded man does not really live. The Spirit of God, who, dove-like, is hovering over the turbid waters of worldliness and sin, has not quickened his soul into life; spiritually he is dead, subject to agonizing fears and remorse, and to the reproaches and stings of a guilty conscience. His life here is nothing but a living death. There is nought but death here and hereafter before him. While the means of true life are within his reach, while he has but to stretch forth the hand and take of the water of life freely, without money and without price, he yet avails not himself of the unspeakably precious privilege: because it is not thrust upon him; because he is not forced to drink of the living waters, he sits down in darkness and the shadow of death, and dies for ever. The great Physician's unceasing and tender care, the medicine of the soul, the life-giving fragrance of the Gospel, all are despised; and the miserable, unhappy man slumbers and sleeps in death, to awake up in torments eternal in the world to come. O was ever madness or folly like this! Can it be that reasoning, intelligent men are so besotted with the vanities and nothingness of time and sense, as not to make one vigorous effort to escape from the thralldom of sin, and from the dread, overhanging wrath to come? Alas, that it should be so! Alas, that men should fear one another, who can at most but injure this perishing body, and not rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell!¹

1) They who die in their sins shall never live to pay the uttermost farthing; they shall never come to the days of refreshment who are cast into perpetual burnings. One part of their misery is the horror of despair; and it were not perfect hell if any hope could lodge in it. The favor of God is not to be obtained where there is no means left to obtain it; but in the world to come there is no place for faith, nor virtue in repentance. If there be now such a vast distance between the tormenting flames and Abraham's bosom, that none could pass from one to the other, what impossibility must there be when the final sentence is passed upon all! As certainly as no person once received into the heavenly mansions shall ever be cast into outer darkness; so certainly none who are

My brethren, ye have heard before what, as speaking the truth in love, I am compelled to say concerning you and your state. I have said, and I repeat again, that there is too much fleshly-mindedness in this parish. There is too great devotion to worldly business in its multiplied forms; too much seeking after pleasure and amusement; and too much of the form of godliness, without the power and spirit thereof. It is my duty to tell you, which I now do in most tender regard for your spiritual welfare, that these things ought not so to be; and in our gracious Master's name, I would fain beseech you to remember always who it is that says, "to be carnally-minded is death;" viz., that it is God the Holy Ghost, one jot or one tittle of whose words shall not pass away until all be fulfilled; until the last trump shall sound, the dead, both small and great, arise, and the righteous go away into eternal life and joy, and the wicked have their portion in shame and everlasting contempt. Strive, then, by the aid of the Spirit, praying without ceasing, against the fleshly-mindedness so generally prevailing on every side. Flee from it as ye would from death and misery; and ye shall never regret it; yea, rather, ye shall find cause for eternal gratitude and joy in the realms of bliss. Go to the Fountain of purification and joy which flows from Calvary's mount, and wash and be clean; and when the time shall come that you must leave this world of probation, then death shall be swallowed up in victory. Then shall this corruptible put on incorruption, this mortal put on immortality. Then shall we exclaim, in the glowing language of St. Paul, "thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

once cast into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels, shall ever enter into their Master's joy. As the tree falleth so it lieth: there is no change to be wrought in man within those flames, no purgation of his sins, no sanctification of his nature, no justification of his person, and therefore no salvation to him; * * his condition is unalterable, his condemnation is irreversible, his torments inevitable, his miseries eternal.—BP. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 565.

Lent.

SERMON XII.

GODLY FEAR.

PSALM xxv. 12.—“What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose.”

“THE fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and of knowledge; a good understanding have all they that do thereafter;”¹ so says the inspired psalmist. “Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man;”² says the wise king of Israel, in giving “the conclusion of the whole matter,” relating to man’s highest interests. “Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear;”³ is the earnest and solemn exhortation of St. Paul, based upon the awful statement that “our God is a consuming fire.” Such, too, is the unvarying testimony of Holy Scripture; which points out not only the blessings of godly fear, but also the grounds or reasons why we ought thus to reverence Him who is the Creator and Redeemer of all men, and whose power, majesty, and goodness are infinite. Hence it becomes man’s highest wisdom to be imbued with this holy fear; it is seen to be his truest interest to seek to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling; and certain it is, that there are blessings promised to those whose souls are filled with fear toward God, which the men of this world neither know nor comprehend. To the

1) Ps. cxi. 10.

2) Eccles. xii. 13.

3) Heb. xii. 28, 29.

acquisition of this needful frame of mind, I invite you, my brethren, at this time, as eminently befitting the holy week, upon which we are just entering ; and I beseech you to ask yourselves, and answer for yourselves, “ what man is he that feareth the Lord ? ” where shall we look for such a man ? by what shall he be known ? or wherein does he differ from the careless and the impenitent ? A little serious and sober reflection and examination will go a great way toward instructing and edifying us on this subject.

I. It is manifest, I think, to those who search the Scriptures diligently, as all men ought to do, that the fear of God therein spoken of, and so highly commended to the creatures of His hand, is something different from what is usually thought or supposed to be the meaning of the term fear. As generally understood, it is one of those strong passions or emotions which operate so widely and so powerfully on the mass of the community ; it more frequently fills men with inquietness and dreadful uneasiness ; it causes them to forebode the approach of evil or calamity, or to await, in stupor and amazement, the coming on of retributive justice ; it urges men in this way or that, according to the nature or the strength of their fears ; deprives them in great measure of the power of reasoning at all, preventing every thing like sober, and calm, and accurate judgment ; and so unfits them for action, as that their energies seem to have left them, and there is hardly aught else save the weakness, helplessness, and insufficiency of childhood. Now (as I have just before said) it is manifest, that the “ fear of the Lord ” is something very different from all this, as any one may see who will consider these plain reasons. The Lord, whom we are to fear, is all-mighty, all-seeing, and all-knowing ; He is infinite in holiness, in purity, in truth ; His justice is perfect ; His mercy and love are over all His works ; and whatsoever attributes go to make up a self-existent, eternal, and perfect Being, are possessed by Him in all their completeness. Consequently, the fear of the Lord can in no respect be similar to that dreadful, agonizing fear, which causes so much anguish and misery in the world.—I say this, let it be well remembered, concern-

ing the regenerate and renovated man, who alone can fear the Lord as He ought to be feared ;—and I ask you, in his case, what room is there for painful apprehension or dread ? Can there be the slightest injustice in Him who is infinitely just ? can there be any misunderstanding, or wrong appreciation of his motives, or unfair estimate of his intentions or actions, by Him who sees and knows all things ? can there be any ground for the supposition, that the love and mercy which induced the Lord Jesus to come into the world, and pour out His precious blood upon the cross, are in any wise shortened, or that they will not obtain for him all that is consistent with justice and truth ? Surely not ; and therefore it is, that the fear of the Lord is not like to that which the common meaning of the word fear might lead you to suppose¹—I say it is not like to that, in this respect at least ; here we dread evil, injustice, oppression, or falsehood, as proceeding from the wicked, or the malicious, or the ignorant ; but we can fear no such things from our Heavenly Father ; while we continue faithful and obedient, the love and confident trust in God which we possess, “casteth out fear.” It is true,

1) Fear, whatever limited or enlarged notion you understand it in, is not a voluntary passion ; we cannot be afraid or not afraid of things just as we please ; but fear necessarily relates to, and arises from, the notion or conception we have of the thing feared : we fear any being in proportion to the power and will which we conceive that being to have either to hurt or to protect us. The different kinds of fear likewise are no otherwise distinguishable from one another, than by considering the different conceptions or ideas of the things feared : for fear being the necessary effect of such conceptions, must differ according to the difference of the conceptions. If we join to great power, great malice, and a settled resolution to do mischief, such an object strikes with terror and confusion, and breeds in our minds a base and slavish fear : if we add to great power, great goodness and benevolence, such an object creates an awe and reverence, and fills our hearts with filial fear and veneration. * * * Of what sort, then, is the fear of the Lord ? Is it an abject, slavish fear ? No, certainly : all expositors agree to warn you against this sense and interpretation of fear. But were you to ask the reason why the fear of God is not a slavish fear, there is only this reason to be given you, because God is no tyrant ; and I suppose every man of sense will admit this for a good reason : and what else is this but adjusting the sense of fear from the true notion and conception of God ?—It is called the fear of God, because as majesty and power are the principal parts of the idea of God, so fear and reverence are the main ingredients in the affection that arises from it ; not but that love, and honor, and admiration, are included in the notion. —

EP. SHERLOCK'S *Works*, Vol. III. p. 55.

we may transgress His holy laws, and provoke His just indignation and wrath against us, and thence be brought to fear the Lord, as turning away the light of His countenance from us, and punishing us for our wickedness; just as the fallen angels and devils, and they who have died impenitent and unbelieving, are filled with fear and horror of the Lord, because of the unspeakably awful punishments which are in reserve for them against the day of judgment. In this sense, it is confessed, the fear of the Lord partakes of apprehension and miserable dread; but it is not the fear of Him, so understood, which the psalmist so constantly urges upon us, and which the children of God and heirs of eternal life feel to be a duty common to them with the holy angels. O no; we cannot fear the holy, merciful, and just Lord, as we do frail and fallible man; if we truly believe in Him, and strive to serve Him with our whole hearts, there will be no room for distressing apprehensions, because we know His power, wisdom, and goodness;¹ all that we can fear will be what arises out of our corrupt natures, evil inclinations, the allurements and temptations of sin, and the continual danger of sinking into spiritual slumber and death.

I would therefore pray you to remember, that the fear of the Lord fills the soul with reverence and affection for every thing pure, and holy, and good; and by these fruits ye may know whether ye possess it: "this fear is not a terrible apprehension of God as an enemy, but a sweet, composed reverence of God as our King, yea, as our Father; as very great, but no less good than great; so highly esteeming of His favor, as fearing most of all things to offend Him in any kind; espe-

1) We must, we may most safely, trust God with our souls; the stake is great, but the venture is none at all: for He is our Creator, and He is faithful; He is our Redeemer, and He bought them at a dear rate; He is our Lord, and they are His own; He prays for them to His Heavenly Father, and therefore He is an interested person—so that He is a party, and an advocate, and a judge, too; and therefore there can be no greater security in the world on God's part; and this is our hope and our confidence; but because we are but earthen vessels under a law, and assaulted by enemies, and endangered by temptations; therefore it concerns us to fear lest we make God our enemy and a party against us.
—BP. JEREMY TAYLOR'S *Works*, Vol. I. p. 652.

cially if the soul have been formerly either under the lash of His apprehended displeasure, or, on the other side, have had some sensible tastes of His love, and have been entertained in His banqueting house, where His banner over it was love. (Cant. ii. 4.) Faith carries the soul above all doubts, with assurance that if sufferings, or sickness, or death come, nothing can separate it from Him. This suffices, yea, what though He may hide His face for a time, though that is the hardest of all, yet there is no separation. His children fear Him for His goodness; are afraid to lose sight of that, or deprive themselves of any of its influences. They desire to live in His favor, and then for other things they are not very thoughtful.”¹ Be well assured, then, my brethren, that the fear of the Lord is a holy self-suspicion, an earnest and constant dread of sin, as offensive to God; it is such filial affection and reverence as become those who have been made His children, and heirs together with Christ; and when united with faith and love, with hope and trust, it makes up the perfection of Christian character.

II. May I not now well ask, in the language of the Psalmist, what man is there among you that feareth the Lord? Is there any such one? ah, are there not rather many who fear the Lord, as I trust I have shown He ought to be feared? Are there not many among you, my brethren, who fear to do evil and who strive to do well; who hate sin and follow hard after righteousness; and who reverence and adore the holy name and majesty of the Lord of Hosts? I have good hope that there are some; I trust and pray that there are many who thus fear the Lord: to all such let me hold forth the promise of the text; “them shall He, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, teach in the way that they shall choose.” The promise is sure and certain, and the import of it is most consoling to the Christian heart. It is no earthly teacher which is here promised; it is no frail man, liable to err or to deceive, which shall direct and guide them who fear the Lord; no, it is nothing short of the Lord and

1) *ABP. LEIGHTON'S Works*, p. 192.

Giver of life Himself, who shall instruct us in the true and living way ; it is that Divine Teacher who descended on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and guided them into all truth ; it is He who alone can open our eyes, enlighten our dull and blinded hearts, or quicken us into life ; and we may safely trust the promise in all its length and breadth. Moreover, they who fear the Lord shall be taught by this heavenly Teacher in the way which they shall choose ; He shall guide them in the way of penitence and peace, the pure and perfect way ; He shall point them to the strait and narrow path that leadeth unto life, and though there be few that find it, yet they shall be of that few. Our Divine Teacher shall show us how we ought to pass the time of sojourning here ; if we fear the Lord, He shall open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of the law of God ; He shall make us to know the way, the truth, and the life, even Christ Jesus, the Lord, whom to know is life eternal ; and He shall so guide and direct us in all our doings, that among all the manifold changes and chances of this mortal life, our hearts will surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.

I declare unto you these comfortable things simply on the authority of God's most holy Word, and I call upon you to hear, believe, and obey, on this authority ; I call upon you to fear and reverence the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, who brought you into being, who continues you in being day by day, and who will certainly at the last bring you into judgment.¹ I call upon you, in the language of St. Peter, to "pass

1) Awful is the comparison between a temporal and eternal existence which is so often enforced and enlarged on by the authors of the Sacred Volume, as a motive for deep reverence toward God on the part of all God's creatures, and as an inducement to raise our thoughts above the limits of a perishable world, to Him in whose presence is deathless life, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure ; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed : but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end." (Ps. cii. 25-27.) If God, then, be eternal, how dreadful must His wrath be esteemed, whose power never passeth away, neither does His purpose change ; who in the same light in which He views any action or thought of ours to-day, must continue to view it through countless ages ; whose

the time of your sojourning here in fear ;” in fear of enemies within and without ; in fear of the malice and arts of the devil, and of wicked men, his children ; and in fear of your own selves, your own weakness, proneness to err, and blindness. Of these things have a salutary, ever present dread ; for they are snares and pitfalls in your path toward heaven. Despise them not, neither think lightly or doubtingly of them ; for heaven or hell, happiness or misery eternal, are the alternatives set before you ; one or the other you shall certainly receive. Be wise, then, to-day, for to-day is the day of salvation. Ye may listen to these words, as I am afraid ye have often listened before, with incredulity ; ye may think that lying deceit of the devil, viz., that the picture is too highly colored, or that the matter is too strongly stated, as is customary with the ministers of the cross ; ye may think that your way is well enough, without the holy fear of the Lord now urged upon you ; God knoweth how deeply I am compelled to feel that ye, for whose souls I am set to watch, thus hear, and thus act ; but He who seeth the end from the beginning, He unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, He will judge between me and you ; He *has* declared, that the man who fears Him as he ought to do, He will teach in the way that he shall choose ; He now declares the same unto you by me, His commissioned ambassador ; His solemn declaration is even this moment sounding in your ears. Will ye be taught by Him ? In our Master’s name, I ask, will ye who are ignorant of the truth as it is in Jesus, will ye be taught by the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of light and life ? will ye forsake and flee from the ways of sin, and vanity, and wordliness, and be guided and instructed from on high in the right way ? or will ye be so fool-hardy as to grope on in darkness and ignorance,

laws are without repeal, and His purposes, though from the first conditional on our actions, are, so far as He is Himself concerned, without repentance or shadow of turning ! If God *is for ever*, how ill do we calculate in preferring to His love and protection, the span of happiness which His visible creation can offer, the fashion of this world, which is so soon to pass away into silence !—Bp. HEBER’S *Sermons in England*, p. 144.

to walk in the way of destruction and death, and thus bring ruin and misery on your own selves ?

If you are wise, you will fear God and keep His commandments ; you will seek to be imbued, day by day, with this holy fear and reverence ; you will search and strive after this first of all, for it is the beginning, the sum and substance of all true wisdom ; fear ye the Lord, and ye shall have nothing else to fear ; fear ye the Lord, and ye shall grow in grace and in the knowledge of our gracious Redeemer. " Serve the Lord with fear, yea, in times of inward comfort and joy, yet rejoice with trembling (Ps. ii. 11), not only when a man feels most his own weakness, but when he finds himself strongest. None are so high advanced in grace here below, as to be out of need of this grace ; but when their sojourning shall be done, and they are come to their Father's house above, then no more fearing. No entry for danger there, and therefore no fear. A holy reverence of the majesty of God they shall indeed have then most of all, as the angels still have, because they shall see Him most clearly, and the more He is known, the more revered : but this fear that relates to danger shall then vanish ; for in that world there is neither sin, nor sorrow for sin, nor temptation to sin ; no more conflicts : but after a full and final victory, an eternal peace, an everlasting triumph. Not only fear, but faith and hope do imply some imperfection not consistent with that blessed estate ; and therefore all of them having obtained their end, shall end, faith in sight, and hope in possession, and fear in perfect safety ; and everlasting love and delight shall fill the whole soul in the vision of God."¹

1) ABP. LEIGHTON'S *Works*, p. 50.



Good-Friday.

SERMON XIII.

THE ONLY GROUND OF HOPE.

1 Cor. i. 23.—“ We preach Christ crucified.”

THIS is the grand theme of Christian preaching. In every age, with more or less distinctness, this has been the message of the Lord of Hosts, speaking by His ministering servants, and by the significant rites and ordinances of His appointment. Moses and the prophets, as well as the holy Apostles, Evangelists, and martyrs, have dwelt upon this theme, as not only replete with interest in itself, but also as most astonishing in its exhibition of the wondrous love and mercy of God. Holy Scripture is full of the doctrine of “Christ crucified;” it abounds in clear and explicit declarations, in constant references and manifold allusions to, and illustrations of, this cardinal point in “our most holy faith.” And the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, in the discharge of her high vocation of making known unto all men the riches of the grace of Christ, has always, and every where, pointed her children to the crucified Redeemer of mankind, as their only ground of hope for eternal life. The good news of salvation to our sinful race, the glad tidings of great joy to all people, have ever been proclaimed through Christ, who died for us that we might live; the sinner, bowed down with a consciousness of guilt and dread of punishment, finding no eye to pity, no arm to save, and having learned by faith that Christ died for the

ungodly, has come boldly to the throne of grace, pleading His all-sufficient merits, His all-atoning sacrifice ; and every member of Christ and child of God, duly sensible of the great and unspeakably precious privileges of his calling, clings to the cross of the Divine Redeemer, as his only hope and refuge in the hour of death and in the day of judgment ; being well assured that it is only they whose souls have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, who shall stand before His throne for ever and ever. It is, therefore, the imperative duty of the stewards of the mysteries of Christ, always, and in all places, to preach unto men Jesus and Him crucified ; so that there may be no vain self-confidence, no proud reliance on the boasted powers and capabilities of human nature, no erring concerning the only way and means of salvation. He must call upon all men, every where, to repent and believe, showing how alone their repentance and faith, in consequence of the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, become effectual to the saving of their souls. Never must he suffer those, for whose souls he is set to watch, to lose sight of the cross of Christ, since here only is light and life, all else being darkness and despair.

Meet will it be then, for us, my brethren, on this holy day, which commemorates the crucifixion of our Lord, to stir up our minds by way of remembrance, seeking to have imprinted upon our souls both the truth this day declared, and our individual need of a Redeemer to bring us from death to life. " We preach Christ crucified (says the Apostle), unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The obstinate and perverse Jew, full of prejudice, may stumble at this truth ; and to the vain disputers of this world among the Greeks it may appear foolishness ; but it is on this account, none the less the doctrine of Holy Scripture : it is none the less precious to the believer. However men may cavil and object to the doctrine of the atonement, and however they may wrest the Scriptures to support their denials or heretical perversions of this truth, it will be found

too plainly written, and too intimately connected with what we know of the wants of the whole race of man, to be questioned by the humble and sincere believer in Christ. Every part of Scripture asserts the doctrine of the atonement, as one of the main and essential truths of revelation. It was shadowed forth in types, under the old dispensation; it was declared by the voice of prophecy; it was literally and exactly completed in the sufferings and death of the Divine Redeemer. "Whether, therefore, (says Bishop Pearson,) we consider the prophecies spoken by God in the mouths of men, they clearly relate unto the sufferings of the Messiah by proper prediction; or whether we look upon the ceremonial performances, they exhibit the same by an active representation. St. Paul's apology was clear, that he said 'none other things but those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer.'¹ The prophets *said* in express terms, that the *Messiah*, whom they foretold, should suffer: Moses *said* so in those ceremonies which were instituted by his ministry. When he caused the pass-over to be slain, he *said* that *Shiloh* was the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world. When he set the brazen serpent up in the wilderness, he *said*, the *Son of man* should be lifted up upon the cross. When he commanded all the sacrifices for sin, he *said*, without effusion of blood there was no remission, and therefore the *Son of God* must die for the sins of men. When he appointed Aaron to go into the holy of holies on the day of atonement, he *said*, *Christ*, our High Priest, should never enter through the veil into the highest heavens to make expiation for us, but by His own blood."² The sufferings of the Messiah thus foretold, and, in the fulness of time, endured, in order to atone for the sins of the world, were accomplished in the death and passion of our Blessed Redeemer; for in truth there was no type of suffering of which He was not the Antitype; there was no predicted passion which He did not fulfil; there was no expression of sorrow and anguish, which He did not experience.

1) Acts xxvi. 22.

2) *Exposition of the Creed*, p. 274.

But, notwithstanding such is the teaching of Holy Scripture, as the Church Catholic has ever testified, still it is contended by some in these latter days, more especially the modern Socinians, that the death of Christ cannot be regarded as a vicarious and propitiatory sacrifice. Now, what saith the Word of God? In it we find our Saviour described as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.¹ We are told that Christ hath given Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God;² and that He needed not, like the high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice daily, first for his own sins, and then for the people's, for that He did once when He offered up Himself.³ It is expressly declared that He is the propitiation for our sins; and God is said to have loved us; and to have sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.⁴ The holy prophet Isaiah speaks of His soul as made an offering for sin;⁵ and it is asserted that God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; and that by Him we have received the atonement.⁶ These and many other passages, equally clear and strong, are contained in Holy Scripture; whence it may well appear strange on what grounds it can be questioned, that the death of Christ is declared to have been a sacrifice of atonement and expiation for the sins of mankind; especially as this sacrifice of our Lord is represented to be of the nature of a sin-offering, which was a species of sacrifice required to be offered on the commission of an offence, after which the offending person was considered as if he had never sinned.⁷

It may suffice to have said thus much concerning the Scriptural doctrine which we are now considering; for though the ingenuity and perverseness of man has raised many plausible objections against this, and other fundamental doctrines inseparably connected with this, yet they are all such as go counter to the plain sense of Holy Writ, and the uniform interpretation of the Church Catholic in all

1) Jno. i. 29.

2) Eph. v. 2.

3) Heb. vii. 27.

4) 1 Jno. ii. 2; iv. 10.

5) Is. liii. 10.

6) Rom. viii. 32; v. 11.

7) See ABP. MAGEE *On Atonement and Sacrifice*, Vol. I, p. 45.

ages; and they have all taken their rise from some human system, which seeks to destroy or fritter away the very life of Christianity. And we might profitably go deeper than this in search of the causes of opposition to the doctrine of the atonement. We might discover the overweening self-conceit, the arrogant pretensions, the proud reliance on its own powers and its own sufficiency, in which the unrenewed heart so greatly delights; and we might see how little there is of humility, the highest grace in the Christian character, in those tenets which rob the Lord Jesus of His Deity and incarnation, and atoning sacrifice on the cross; which degrade Him into a mere man like ourselves; which induce men to deny all the sad and fearful evidences of inherited depravity every where exhibited; and which direct them to place their trust in themselves and in themselves alone. Yes, my brethren, they who hold such sentiments, falsely styled rational Christianity, show us nothing which tends to humble the pride and vanity of the heart in any of their schemes. On the contrary, every thing calculated to raise man in his own opinion, to make him forget that he is a sinner and unable to help himself, and to lead him to turn away from and despise the enlightening and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit; every thing of this description is fostered and encouraged by their system of religion, if system it may be called.¹ We, however, have not so learned the truth as

1) Let it be to the Jews a scandal, or offensive to their fancy prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity; let it be folly to the Greeks, or seem absurd to men imbued (puffed up, corrupted) with fleshly notions and maxims of worldly craft, disposing men to value nothing which is not grateful to present sense or fancy; that God should put His own most beloved Son into so very sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, glory, and happiness, should issue from these fountains of extreme sorrow and shame; that a person in external semblance devoted to so opprobrious and slavish usage, should be the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and Judge of all the world; let this doctrine, I say, be scandalous and distasteful to some persons tainted with prejudice; let it appear strange and incredible to others blinded with self-conceit; let all the proud, all the profane, all the inconsiderate part of mankind, slight and reject it; yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous; to us it is πιστὸς λόγος, "a faithful (and credible) proposition, worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world thus

it is in Jesus. We have been taught to look unto Christ crucified, as our only hope, our only dependence. And we bless God for it; yea, we magnify His holy name, in that He has enabled us to hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints. It is our privilege to know and believe in Christ Jesus, not as man only, but as God also, as God manifest in the flesh. It is our privilege to know that He is almighty to save, ever ready to hear and answer our prayers; and it is also our privilege to know that He was crucified on this day, not for Himself, but for the sins of the whole world; that He it was who wrought out our salvation; who satisfied the demands of infinite justice and holiness; who made peace by the shedding of His precious blood; and opened the way by which we may be pardoned and received again into favor with God. Such good things as these are procured for us by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are freely offered to all who come unto Him in penitence and faith. No humble and devoted seeker after truth shall ever be disappointed. God, the Saviour, stands ready to receive him, to wash away all his sins in the blood of the Lamb, and to give him the aid of the Holy Spirit, that he may walk worthy of the high vocation wherewith he is called, and at last be gathered unto his fathers, in the communion of the Catholic Church, and in hope of a joyful resurrection and of the life to come. But it is very sad to think how awfully the guilt of those is increased, who, though they hear of a Saviour's dying love, obey not, but turn away and despise the riches of His grace. Alas, for such and for all who "sin wilfully after that they have received the knowledge of the truth, there re-

to save sinners;" to us who discern by a clearer light, and are endued with a purer sense, kindled by the Divine Spirit, from whence, with comfortable satisfaction of mind, we may apprehend and taste that God could not in a higher measure, or a fitter manner, illustrate His glorious attributes of goodness and justice, His infinite grace and mercy toward His poor creatures, His holy displeasure against wickedness, His impartial severity in punishing iniquity and impiety, or in vindicating His own honor and authority, than by thus ordering His Son to suffer for us; that also true virtue and goodness could not otherwise be taught, be exemplified, be commended and impressed with greater advantage.—
DR. BARROW'S *Works*, Vol. VI. p. 106

maineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."¹

O then let us take good heed to our own selves. We may profess this doctrine with our mouths, and deny it in our lives;² we may be right in theory, but fatally wrong in practice; we may have our understandings convinced, and yet be untouched in heart, unrenewed in the spirit of our mind. Therefore, let us seek to be thoroughly alive to our individual and personal concern in Christ crucified. Let us pray and strive to have not a bare, speculative knowledge and belief in this doctrine, but a hearty, practical understanding of it, by feeling our own wants and necessities, and whence alone we can obtain help and comfort. If, my beloved brethren, you are not thus affected by the atoning sacrifice of our gracious Redeemer, if you do not feel and perceive that He died for *your* sins, to save *you* from death and misery, then let me warn you to beware; let me beseech you to realize how dangerous is your condition. Your hearts cannot be right in the sight of God while you

1) Heb. x. 26, 27.

2) How astonishing is the absurdity, to profess our belief of the Gospel, and at the same time to continue in the deliberate commission of sin! It was sin that made it necessary for the Son of God to suffer and die. How fatal would be our fickleness, were we to permit our penitential sorrows to pass away like the morning cloud and the early dew, and leave no fruits behind them! Rather let the warmest sentiments of love and gratitude be awakened in our bosoms. Let us learn to abhor that evil which was the occasion of such acute distress to our compassionate Lord. Let us follow Him in our meditations through the various scenes of His cross and passion, and let a spirit of fervent devotion lead us to the holy altar, *there* to behold the memorials of that body which was broken, and that blood which was shed to make atonement for guilt; *there* to receive the pledges of His never-ceasing love, to the great comfort and refreshment of our souls. Strengthened with might in the inner man, let us run in the way of all His commandments. Thus shall our temporary sorrow be turned into everlasting joy. Having followed the Redeemer in His humility, and participated in His sufferings, if the will of God be so, we shall be prepared to partake in His triumph. We shall behold his foes completely vanquished; even the last enemy, which is death, for ever destroyed. We shall see, to our endless joy and exultation, *Him* who suffered on Calvary, exalted above all principalities and power, thrones and dominions; as willing, as He is able, to do for the advancement of our eternal felicity, exceeding abundant above all that we can ask or think.—DR. BENJ. MOORE, *Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 192.

continue thus. Let me also pray you to lay the Apostle's solemn words to heart now in the day of your probation ; "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? * * It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."4

1) Heb. x. 28, 29, 31.



Good-Friday.

SERMON XIV.

THE TRUE PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE.

HEB. ix. 22.—“Without shedding of blood is no remission.”

THE Epistle to the Hebrews was written by St. Paul with a special and most important object in view; being addressed to the Hebrew Christians, the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, who had acknowledged and worshipped the Divine Messiah, it was for their benefit that the inspired Apostle dwelt so much at large upon the topics discussed in this Epistle. In the most full and convincing manner he shows the typical nature of the Mosaic law, and the sacrificial offerings required by it; declares that these sacrifices are unable to purge the conscience, having no inherent excellence for this purpose; and asserts most positively, the Divinity of the Messiah, the abrogation of the Levitical law, and the fulness and completeness of that one offering of Christ upon the cross, whereby eternal redemption has been purchased, and from whence all sacrifices, offerings, services or duties, of what kind soever, derive their efficacy and are accepted by God.¹ Thus the Apostle manifests the superiority and ex-

1) All the sacrifices of old instituted by God, we may with full confidence affirm, to have been chiefly preparatory unto, and prefigurative of this most true and perfect sacrifice; by virtue whereof indeed those *ὑποδείγματα* and *σκιαί*, umbratic representations (or insinuations) did obtain their substance, validity, and effect: if they did not signify this in design, they could signify nothing in effect; for as “without shedding of blood there was no remission,” (God’s anger would not be appeased, nor His justice satisfied without it; it being

cellence of the Gospel, and takes occasion to urge most affectionately, steadfast adherence to the truth as it is in Jesus. The passage chosen as the text occurs in the course of the argument by which is demonstrated the imperfection of the legal dispensation, and the dignity and perfect efficacy of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith; and pointing, as it does, to the Divine economy or arrangement respecting the means employed for enabling man to obtain pardon and acceptance with God, its consideration seems peculiarly appropriate to this holy and solemn day, on which we are met to commemorate, with thankful hearts, the precious blood-shedding of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. O may God the Holy Spirit sanctify our souls, and quicken them to a right understanding and hearty faith in the ways of godliness!

“Without shedding of blood is no remission,” such having been the Divine arrangement in regard to our fallen race. God, in His infinite wisdom, was pleased from the very beginning to appoint sacrifices, or the pouring out of blood, as an expiation for the sins or crimes of men. It was doubtless by His command that Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and offered them unto the Lord. Of Noah and Abraham, it is recorded, that they offered burnt offerings and sacrifices, which were accepted by God; the same too is written of Job and his friends; and from the time of Moses every one is

blood which, according to God’s prescription, did “did make atonement for the soul,”) as the appointment of those sacrifices did speak and signify; so “it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin;” that those “legal gifts and sacrifices should perfect the conscience of him that did the service;” that is, should entirely assure him of pardon and impunity, or raise in him a strong and clear hope of God’s favor: the lives of beasts were not in value answerable, nor could fitly be subrogated instead of men’s souls, which had offended, and thence were liable to death; the effusion of their blood could not reasonably satisfy a man’s conscience, sensible of guilt and fearful of God’s displeasure, that by it God was fully appeased; they must therefore refer unto a *κρείττων θυσία*, “a more excellent sacrifice;” one more sufficient in itself, and more acceptable to God; in virtue of which and in regard thereto, sin might be thoroughly expiated, God’s wrath might be propitiated, Divine vengeance might be removed, the mind of man therefore might be comforted and contented.

—DR. BARROW’S *Works*, Vol. VI. p. 119.

aware how exact and positive were the commands of God on this point. If to these be added "the *universality* of the practice; the *sameness* of the notion of its efficacy, pervading nations and ages the most remote; and the *unreasonableness* of supposing any natural connection between the slaying of an animal and the receiving pardon for the violation of God's laws;"¹ the divine origin of sacrifice will be clearly evident, notwithstanding the attempts of several learned and able men to show that it is of mere human invention. Waiving, however, farther discussion of this point on the present occasion, and assuming, as we are justified in doing, that this is the correct view of the subject, let me call your attention to what more immediately concerns us, as Christians, to know and to believe. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" for us; had not blood been poured out in expiation of our sins, they had remained unpardoned, and we would have been liable to the unutterably dreadful consequences of sin and guilt against God. Had not the Divine Redeemer shed His blood upon the cross, there could have been no remission of our sins, and so no peace, no restoration to the favor of God, and no hope or prospect of eternal happiness in the world to come.² Had not He made an atonement for the sins of the whole world by the one offering of Himself, we had remained in a state of enmity and alienation, "having no hope (as says St. Paul), and without God in the world."³

1) ABP MAGEE, *On Atonement and Sacrifice*, Vol. I. p. 55.

2) It is not said merely that He (i. e. Christ) died for our sakes, for our instruction, for our example, for the establishment of our faith in that doctrine of immortality, which if He were not the first to discover, He was certainly the first to demonstrate and render familiar to all mankind. Though all these beneficial ends, and many besides these, were brought to pass by His innocent death and meritorious sufferings, yet more than this is surely implied in the expression that "we are dead in Him;" nor am I aware of any manner in which the action or suffering of one person can thus be placed to the account of another, except when the first person is the substitute or representative of the other. It must follow, then, that the death of our Lord was strictly vicarious and propitiatory; that He suffered in order that we might escape; and that we all, but for Him, must have been liable to the same sorrows, or sorrows greater than those which, in His person, satisfied the displeasure of an offended Deity.—BR. HEPER'S *Sermons in England*, p. 376, 8.

3) Eph. ii. 12.

It cannot fail, I trust, to be observed, that the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, now broadly and distinctly asserted, involves necessarily several other momentous truths respecting our race. Why was it needful for the Son of God to take our nature upon Him, and die upon the cross for us? Why were mankind unable to serve their Creator and beneficent Lord faithfully and acceptably? Why could they not obtain peace of conscience, freedom from fear, and the many blessings for which man was doubtless formed at the first? The Word of God supplies the only answer. It teaches us those sad and humiliating truths which we are so unwilling to learn; it declares to us that our first parents sinned and fell; and that by their fall they entailed upon all their descendants a sinful and corrupt nature, by which they are inclined to evil rather than good; in consequence of which, they are blind, wayward, and perverse; and by following the bent or tendency of which, they commit grievous offences against God. Mankind are, moreover, weak and helpless, as it respects good; they cannot turn themselves from their sinful ways, and obey God; they cannot resist temptation; they cannot escape fears and dreads concerning the future:—and hence, being thus fallen and miserable, thus powerless and hopeless, they could not work out their own salvation; they could not restore themselves to that favor of God which they had lost. It was here that the Lord, in the fulness of His mercy and compassion, interposed: the guilty and self-ruined progenitors of our race might, had it pleased Him, been left to reap the full consequences of their transgression; but He did not consign them and their children, in all succeeding ages, to irremediable ruin and despair. No, blessed be His name, He did not do thus. So far from this, He provided a way of escape, He provided a ransom from death; He supplied the means whereby man might even yet be saved from the horrible punishments denounced against sin and uncleanness, and be exalted to eternal and unspeakable bliss. And that way, that ransom, that mean of safety, was to be found only through the mediation and expiatory offering of the Re-

deemer, who, in the fulness of time should make a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Hence (in the language of the learned and godly Archbishop Magee), "it is obvious that the promise made to our first parents conveyed an intimation of some future deliverer, who should overcome the tempter that had drawn man from his innocence, and remove those evils which had been occasioned by the fall. This assurance, without which, or some other ground of hope, it seems difficult to conceive how the principle of religion could have had place among men, became to our first parents the grand object of faith. To perpetuate this fundamental article of religious belief among the descendants of Adam, some striking memorial of the fall of man and of the promised deliverance, would naturally be appointed. And if we admit (as it is conceived we must) that the scheme of redemption by the death of the only begotten Son of God, was determined from the beginning; that is, if we admit that when God had ordained the deliverance of man, He had ordained the means; if we admit that Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; what more apposite memorial could be devised than that of animal sacrifice?—exemplifying by the slaying of the victim, the death which had been denounced against man's disobedience: thus exhibiting the awful lesson of that death which was the wages of sin, and at the same time representing that death which was actually to be undergone by the Redeemer of mankind:—and hereby connecting, in one view, the two great cardinal events in the history of man—the *fall* and the *recovery*; the death denounced against sin; and the death appointed for that Holy One, who was to lay down His life to deliver man from the consequences of sin."¹ Considered in this light, there seems to be a peculiar significancy in the Divine arrangement respecting the shedding of blood in order to procure remission of sins, implying, as it does, that our blood was forfeited, and death was our legitimate portion; and

1) ARCH. MAGEE *On Atonement and Sacrifice*, Vol. I. p. 59.

leading to the humble and thankful confession, that the blood of Christ was poured out in our stead, and that His life was voluntarily given to ransom us from death,—He undergoing, for our restoration to the favor of God, that death which was the punishment of sin,—He suffering in like manner as if the sins of men had been *actually* transferred to Him, as those of the congregation (on the solemn anniversary of expiation) had been *symbolically* transferred to the sin-offering of the people.

Such being the case, such being the condition of mankind by nature, since the fall, and such, too, being the Divine arrangement for rescuing our race from the awful consequences of sin unpardoned and persisted in, we may well learn the lessons of practical moment and concern which properly flow from the knowledge of the revealed plan for universal redemption. Yes, my brethren, we may well seek to be imbued with lively faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and a deep realization of its absolute need for our individual salvation. O how inconceivably great, how unutterably heinous must sin have been, which brought so many miseries and such entire ruin upon the race of man, and required the sacrifice upon the cross of the only begotten Son of God, Himself “God manifest in the flesh !” and O how immense and incomprehensible that love and compassion, which prompted God the Father to send His only Son to be a ransom for His rebellious creatures ; which induced the Divine Redeemer to leave the throne of His glory, and to become a man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, shedding his precious blood for our redemption from death, and that we might have hope of eternal life ; and which brought from heaven the Lord and Giver of life to enlighten, purify, comfort, and strengthen us, in this our weary pilgrimage ! What Christian is there who can be aught else, on this day, but *humble* and *thankful*?—humble he must of necessity be, when he thinks upon what he is by nature, how blind, weak, prone to sin, rebellious, and unbelieving ; and how utterly unable he is to work out his own salvation ; yea, there is no room for pride or vain self con-

ceit, when he reflects upon his nothingness in the sight of God, his manifold offences, his daily sins of omission and commission, and the unprofitableness of even his best services. The Christian cannot read and pray over his Bible without learning the lesson of humility; for therein he is taught his true condition and his entire inefficiency; neither can the Christian look into his own heart, or abroad over the face of society, without being struck with the same lamentable truth, without feeling and mourning over the corruption and degradation of his race. With this humble frame of mind is joined hearty and continual *thankfulness*; and for the best of reasons. On this day, our Lord and our God died to redeem us and all mankind from sin and eternal death; on this day, He shed His precious blood for the remission of sins, triumphing on the cross over sin, Satan, and death; on this day, he declared, "it is finished;" man's redemption is wrought out; man can now be released from the tyranny of sin and guilt; man can now have strength from God successfully to resist temptation, and to become more than conqueror through me: and surely, knowing and believing all this, cold indeed and callous must be his heart, if it do not overflow with praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His unspeakable gift; strange would it be, when all that the Christian has is of the free and unmerited gift of God His Saviour, were he not thankful; nay, it is impossible for him not to be thankful, when he remembers how much has been done for his salvation, how much is every day being done to raise him from the death of sin unto the life of holiness, and how many and how precious are the means of grace, which the Lord has provided in His Church, and of which we are invited and urged to partake.

Let us, then, who bear the name of the crucified Redeemer of mankind, let us on this day, pray to have our souls imbued with a deep and a realizing sense of what this Lord and Saviour has procured for us; let us strive to know (as we must, would we be in any wise benefited by Christ's death) that He died for our sins, in order that we, each one of us, might obtain remission and forgiveness, and might be

saved through His meritorious sacrifice and intercession ; and let us continually seek the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may heartily believe, and act upon the belief, in the atonement ; and may not only profess this fundamental doctrine with our lips, but may show our faith in it in our lives ; for believe me, my brethren, it is not enough to believe in Christ's death, as, alas, too many do ; it is not enough barely to assent to this truth, without applying it to our souls, and making it the grand object of faith and devotion. O no ; it is not enough to have a mere speculative knowledge and belief of that on which depends the eternal safety of us all ; nothing, nothing short of a practical understanding of this doctrine, and a personal application of Christ's death, can be of any avail ; here, remission can be obtained—here, but nowhere else. O beware, then, lest it be said of any of us, ye have trodden under foot the Son of God, ye have counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith ye are sanctified, an unholy thing, and have done despite unto the Spirit of grace ; nay, rather, having a High Priest who is touched with a sense of our infirmities, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. For (to our comfort be it spoken) yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.¹

1) Heb. x. 29 ; iv. 15 ; x. 22, 37.



Easter.

SERMON XV.

OUR INTEREST IN CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

ROM. iv. 25.—“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

THE Apostle St. Paul, in the course of his reasoning respecting justification by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, shows, in this chapter, that this cardinal doctrine of the Gospel by no means makes void any law which God has at any time imposed upon His creatures; on the contrary, that it is perfectly consistent with His revealed will, as made known to us in Holy Scripture. To set the matter in a clear light, he appeals to the case of Abraham, to whom the promise of God was made, not through the law, (seeing that it was prior to the promulgation of the law of Moses, and the institution of circumcision,) but through the righteousness of faith. Abraham believing in God, his faith was counted unto him for righteousness; whence it is clear that the promise was annexed to faith, that it might be by grace, (being bestowed freely on the part of God, without any merit on the part of man,) to the end that this promise might be sure to all the seed of Abraham, whether under the law, or being of the faith of Abraham, the father of us all. St. Paul then describes the excellency and strength of the patriarch's faith, on which the promise was grounded, and which was imputed to him for righteousness; concluding the chapter in these words: “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord

from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Hence it will be observed, that the main topic of the Apostle's discourse is the necessity of faith, and the blessings consequent upon it; and that the declaration of the text is incidentally introduced (as indeed is customary with St. Paul) while he is setting forth the grand object of all true faith, viz., God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. It must not, however, be supposed that less importance is to be attached to the inspired account in the text, of the purpose of our Lord's death and resurrection, because it is thus briefly stated, or because the Apostle does not enlarge upon so glorious, so wonderful, and so cheering a theme. It was not needful for his argument to say more in this place than he has said, especially as the doctrines of the vicarious sacrifice and death of the Redeemer, and His glorious resurrection, had always been prominent in Apostolic teaching and preaching, and were fully set forth in the Gospels and Epistles composed under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. In fact, we ought to receive with the greatest confidence the plain and positive assertions in the passage now before us, and ought to attach to them the full meaning which the words seem clearly to bear; because, obviously, the Apostle takes for granted the truths declared, no Christian in his day either denying or doubting them. I shall therefore invite your attention to this portion of God's holy Word, in consequence of its meetness on this holy festal day, and its leading to a full acknowledgment of, and hearty thankfulness for, the inestimable benefits and blessings procured for mankind by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

I. We are taught that *Christ died for (i. e. on account of) our offences*. These, the sins and guilt of our race, were the cause of His death. These, the multiplied offences, the continual transgressions, the perverse rebellions of mankind in all ages—these, and such like, have separated between them and their God, and have plunged them into the depths of degradation, misery, and ruin. For these they could

make no reparation; they could in no wise satisfy the demands of justice for the violations of God's law; there was no arm of flesh, no power of angel or archangel, which could help them, or rescue them from death and unending despair: there was but One who could save a lost and ruined race; there was but One who could atone for man's offences, and thereby sustain the majesty and sanctity of the holy law of God, and open the door of restoration to that favor which he had forfeited; and this One (need I say it to you, Christians?) was the only-begotten Son of God, the Second Person in the adorable Trinity, God manifest in the flesh. He only could redeem us; His arm alone could bring salvation; and it was in the fulness of that inexpressible love, which, as the Apostle says, passeth knowledge, that He came into the world, being a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; being despised and rejected of men; being wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; and having laid upon Him, the sinless, spotless Saviour, the iniquity of us all. Thus truly were our offences the cause of His agony and death; our sins made sharp the thorns, our guilt helped to drive the nails into His hands and feet.¹ On account of these, the horrible enormities of transgression, (as the Evangelists relate,) "He began to be sorrowful; to be sore amazed; and

1) Thou, O Blessed Jesus, wast willing, for our sakes, to submit Thyself to nakedness, hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation, contempt, betraying, agonies, scorn, buffetings, scourgings, distention, crucifixion, death. O love above measure, without example, beyond admiration! Greater love, Thou sayest, hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; but O, what is it, then, that Thou, who art God and man, shouldest lay down Thy life, more precious than many worlds, for thine enemies! Yet had it been but the laying down of a life in a fair and gentle way, there might have been some mitigation of the sorrow of a dissolution. There is not more difference betwixt life and death, than there may be betwixt some one kind of death and another. Thine, O dear Saviour, was the painful, shameful, cursed death of the cross; wherein all that man cou'd do unto Thee, was nothing to that inward torment, which in our stead Thou enduredst from Thy Father's wrath, when in the bitterness of Thy anguished soul, Thou criest out, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Even thus wast Thou content to be forsaken, that we wretched sinners might be received to mercy. O love stronger than death, which Thou vanquishedst! More high than that hell is deep, from which thou hast rescued us!—BP. HALL, "*The Derout Soul*," Ch. IV. Sect. 1.

to be very heavy." "He was possessed with fear, horror, and amazement, encompassed with grief, and overwhelmed with sorrow; pressed down with consternation and dejection of mind; tormented with anxiety and disquietude of spirit." O then, "behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto that sorrow which was done unto Him, wherewith the Lord afflicted Him in the day of His fierce anger."¹ And O consider, "if the true contrition of one single sinner, bleeding under the sting of the law, only for his own iniquities, all which, notwithstanding he knoweth not, cannot be performed without great bitterness of sorrow and remorse; what bounds can we set unto that grief, what measures to that anguish which proceedeth from a full apprehension of all the transgressions of so many millions of sinners?"²

II. Not, however, to dwell upon this point, (which indeed was more fully considered in the services and discourse on Good Friday,) let us endeavor to lay hold upon what is taught in the latter clause of the text; "was raised again for our justification." The *fact* of the resurrection of Christ is here clearly assumed by the Apostle; a fact which St. Paul elsewhere makes to be essential to the very existence of Christianity. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; ye are yet in your sins; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ; and still more, if Christ be not raised, then they who have fallen asleep in Him are perished."³ On the reality and verity of His resurrection, the Lord Jesus based His claims to be the Divine Messiah. On this fact the Apostles always insisted, and constantly appealed to it as infallibly proving the divine origin and obligation of the Gospel; and had it not taken place, all that preceded, however strange and unaccountable, must at once have been shown to be mere juggling deceit and imposture. Thus needful is it for every one who names the name of Christ, to be assured of the certainty of His resurrection; and most earnestly do I beseech you, my

1) Lam. i. 12.

(2) Bp. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 282, 3.

3) 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15, 18.

brethren, to be well grounded in the profession of this fundamental truth of our holy religion. Without entering into any detail of proofs, (which are plain, abundant, and perfectly convincing,) let us rather consider the *doctrine* of the resurrection of Christ, and the *benefits* which we receive thereby. The special and most important one is that mentioned in the text; "was raised again for our justification;" that is to say, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus set the seal of Divinity upon His mission and claims; it was the last in the series of wonderful events which occurred in the course of His mediatorial career upon earth; and by it was completed all that was required for the redemption of the whole human race: so that His rising again gives us infallible assurance that we shall be justified, or accepted as righteous persons, through faith; and "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, it shall be imputed to us for righteousness,"¹ because "He rose from the dead to show that He had made full satisfaction for those sins which we committed, that we, believing in Him, might obtain remission of our sins and justification of our persons. God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; and raising up our surety from the prison of the grave,"² did convey to us the most consoling evidence that the atonement was now complete, and that by faith in this atonement we might lay hold upon the promised blessings and privileges of the new covenant.³ In this

1) Rom. iv. 24.

2) Bp. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 393.

3) The Resurrection of Christ is the only guarantee of the efficacy of His atonement. Jesus was not subject to the power of death on His own account, for in Him sin had no place, and death is the consequence of sin and of sin alone. (Rom. v. 12.) His death therefore was proof that the sins of others were laid on Him. But had death retained Him in its bands, we might indeed have known that He was implicated in our sins; but should have had no evidence that by His participation in their punishment, He had *removed* their guilt. It was when He burst the bands of death and triumphed over the grave, that He proved the consummation of His work—the abrogation of the curse as regards all who should come under the conditions of His covenant. The great propitiatory sacrifice was then declared to be complete, and crowned with the Divine acceptance, by the restoration to life and exaltation to glory of the victim.—Bp. WHITTINGHAM, *Parish Library*, Vol. I, p. 95.

sense, viz. by affording a firm, indeed, the only firm ground of faith, the Redeemer may truly be said to have risen "for our justification;" and if we bear in mind the strong and unqualified language of St. Paul to the Corinthians, we shall, I think, be confirmed in this view of the subject: "If Christ be *not* risen, your faith is vain and empty; ye are yet in your sins;" there neither is nor can be remission of your sins; there is no hope of any thing beyond this life, and ye are of all men most miserable;—thus, as is plain, making all true Christian faith to be inseparably connected with, or necessarily dependent on, the resurrection of Christ; and thus, in effect, declaring that there is full assurance, complete certainty of our justification through faith in the atonement.¹

Here, my brethren, let us pause for a moment; and, remembering the glorious event which we this day celebrate, let us seek to apply to ourselves the *solemn warning*, and the *unspeakable comfort*, which properly flow from a consideration of this subject. The warning is briefly this: We must not look upon the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour from the dead, simply as a fact which occurred some eighteen hun-

1) As God in the death of our Lord did manifest His wrath toward us, and execute His justice on us, so in raising Him thence correspondently God did express Himself appeased, and His law to be satisfied; as we in His suffering were punished, ("the iniquity of us all being laid on Him,") so in His resurrection we were acquitted and restored to grace; as Christ did merit the remission of our sins and the acceptance of our persons by His passion, so God did consign them to us in His resurrection; it being that formal act of grace, whereby, having sustained the brunt of God's displeasure, He was solemnly reinstated in favor, and we representatively, or virtually, in Him; so that (supposing our due qualifications and the performances requisite on our parts) we thence become completely justified, having not only a just title to what justification doth import, but a real instatement therein, confirmed by the resurrection of our Saviour; whence "He was, saith St. Paul, delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." * * * Hence in our baptism, (wherein justification and a title to eternal life are exhibited to us,) as the death and burial of Christ are symbolically undergone by us; so therein also we do interpretatively rise with Him;" being," saith St. Paul, "buried with Christ in baptism, in it we are also raised together with Him;" and "baptism," St. Peter telleth us, being anti-type of the passage through the flood, "doth save us by the resurrection of Christ" presented therein.—DR. BARROW'S *Works*, Vol. VI. p. 182.

dred years ago. We must not assent to it barely as a matter of ancient history, just as we do to whatever is transmitted to us by credible witnesses from former times. If this be the light in which our Master's resurrection be looked upon by us, we shall not in the slightest degree be benefited by it. In vain, if this be all, did He shed His precious blood; in vain did He lie down in the grave; in vain did He rise again on the third day. O far, far higher must we estimate His glorious resurrection. We must ever remember that it is a matter of faith, equally with the other fundamental articles summed up in the Apostles' creed. We must esteem it (as it is set forth in the Gospels and Epistles) as the crowning event in the plan for universal redemption; as establishing beyond all contradiction the truth of Christ's mission, the Divinity of His Messiahship, and the obligation on all men to believe and obey His commands; and as certainly procuring for us the promised grace and guidance of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, be ye warned against misapprehending, and so losing all benefit from the resurrection; and seek continually to have a lively and steadfast faith in that Divine Saviour who was delivered to death for your offences, and rose again for your justification; remembering alway, that neither His death nor His resurrection will profit you, except you have that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart.

But, in addition to this needful warning, let me point you to the solid and unspeakable comfort which the Christian may draw from this doctrine. By it our hope is grounded and settled on the Rock of Ages; for "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (as says St. Peter) hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled,"¹ and "if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."² "He laid down His life, but it was for us; and being to take up His own, He took up ours. We are the members of that body of

1) 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

2) Rom. v. 10.

which Christ is the Head. If the Head be risen, the members cannot be far behind. He is the 'first born from the dead,' and we 'the sons of the resurrection.'¹ The Spirit of Christ abiding in us, makes us members of Christ; and by the same Spirit we have a full right and title to rise with our Head. 'For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in us, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us.'² He 'shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body,'³ and 'as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.'⁴ This is the hope of a Christian, that Christ rising from the dead hath obtained the power, and is become the pattern of his resurrection.'⁵ And is it not a glorious hope, full of consolation? What more comforting to the sorrowing and mourning, who have been separated from those near and dear to them, than the certainty of the resurrection, when they shall meet again, never to part, when they shall be as the angels of God? What can give us patience and resignation under bereavements like this well-grounded hope? for when we are called upon to perform the last sad offices for the dead who have died in the Lord, we do indeed commit their bodies to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; but at the same time we look for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and we know that as He died and rose again, so we and all who die in the true faith of His holy name, shall rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life. Therefore, my brethren, let us hold fast our profession without wavering, knowing in whom we have trusted; for "our hope depends not on our own strength or wisdom, not on any thing in us, since if it did, it would be short-lived, would die, and die quickly; but on His resurrection, who can die no more; for in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in

1) Col. i. 18; Luke xx. 36.

2) Rom. viii. 11.

3) Phil. iii. 21.

4) 1 Cor. xv. 49.

5) See BR. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 393.

that He liveth, He liveth unto God :”¹—and let the words of the beloved Disciple fill our hearts with joy and peace in believing:—“ Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”²

1) Rom. vi. 10.

1) ABP. LEIGHTON'S *Works*, p. 15.

2) 1 John iii. 2, 3.



Easter.

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROVED.

1 COR. xv. 13, 14.—“If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

SUCH are the strong and unqualified declarations of St. Paul concerning the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our own as inseparably connected with it. It is a truth which not only this Apostle continually preached and dwelt upon, but which runs through the whole scheme of revelation; and if this be taken away, or if this cannot be fully and clearly substantiated, then indeed is all the preaching of the cross vain, and our faith is vain and valueless; “we are yet in our sins, and they also which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” It cannot, therefore, be otherwise than highly proper and advantageous for the confirmation and enlivening of our faith, to set forth in order the truth on this subject, and to see what are the grounds on which we believe that Christ is risen from the dead. This I purpose to do, as much at large as the time customarily allotted to the public preaching of the word will permit, holding myself in readiness, however, to explain or clear up in private, such difficulties as may suggest themselves to your minds.

Let it *First* be noted, as having an important bearing on the evidence for the resurrection, that *it was the subject of prophecy*. He who was in “the bosom of the Father,” who

left the throne of His eternal glory, and took upon Him the form of a servant, had long previously predicted His death and resurrection, by the Holy Ghost, who has ever spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets, since the world began: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee;"¹ which declaration, says St. Paul in his discourse to the assembled Jews, in Antioch, "God has fulfilled, in that He hath raised up Jesus again."² "My flesh shall rest in hope; for Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption;"³ concerning which St. Peter assures us, that David being a prophet, here "spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption."⁴ Our blessed Master Himself, "God manifest in the flesh," in the course of His ministry upon earth, often foretold His sufferings, death, and resurrection on the third day; and appealed to the last as the infallible proof of His Divine mission. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."⁵ "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; but there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."⁶ "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."⁷ And St. John tells us, that "when Jesus was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them: and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."⁸

Nor was the resurrection the subject of prophets only; it was also, *Secondly, constantly preached by the Apostles, and by the Church Catholic in all ages.* They who were commissioned by their risen Lord to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, never failed to tell of His resurrection, as incontestably establishing the truth

1) Ps. ii. 7.

4) Acts ii. 31.

7) Jno. x. 17, 18.

2) Acts xiii. 33.

5) Jno. ii. 19, 21.

8) John ii. 22.

3) Ps. xvi. 9, 10.

6) Matt. xii. 39, 40.

which they proclaimed. St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, when for the first time the good news of salvation were promulged, made the resurrection the theme of his discourse. When they were persecuted by the Sadducees and the chief priests, who were "grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead,"¹ the same Apostle St. Peter, with the beloved Disciple, boldly declared, that "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, God had raised from the dead;"² and all "the Apostles with great power gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."³ When they were cast into prison for teaching in the name and by the authority of their Master, and were the next day brought before the Sanhedrim, or the supreme council of the nation, with one accord they testified, that "the God of our fathers had raised up Jesus."⁴ When St. Peter was specially sent to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and those with him, this was his testimony concerning the Lord Jesus; "Him God raised up the third day."⁵ The great Apostle to the Gentiles, standing in the midst of the learned and wise of Greece, notwithstanding their sneers and mockings, "preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection;"⁶ and in his noble defence before king Agrippa, he positively asserts, that he says "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead."⁷ And doubtless, all those beside the Apostles, who were witnesses of their Lord's resurrection, published far and wide the glorious and cheering evidence which this afforded, that as He who is "the first fruits" is risen from the dead, so we also shall rise again; and if we "are Christ's at His coming,"⁸ we shall inherit life and immortality. So, too, the Church Catholic in all ages has held forth the resurrection as one of the fundamental truths of our holy religion. In her creeds or formularies of faith, this doctrine is distinctly and always

1) Acts iv. 2.

2) Ib. iv. 10.

3) Ib. iv. 33.

4) Ib. v. 30.

5) Ib. x. 40.

6) Ib. xvii. 18, 31.

7) Ib. xxvi. 22, 23.

8) 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23.

stated. It is woven into every liturgy and public service of the Church ; it is mentioned, proved, and commented upon by writers of every period and every nation ; whatever discussions or disputes there may be on other points, whatever doubts or difficulties about other matters, there is none concerning the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is too intimately connected with the essential truth of the Gospel, it is too fully and abundantly proved, to be by them regarded as in any way doubtful or uncertain : indeed, there has always been a standing and perpetual proof of the resurrection, in the yearly celebration of Easter ; for this high festal day is coeval with the Apostles ; and was appointed and observed by them in every branch of the Church. And we, my brethren, in our Creeds, in our public prayers, in our solemn Litany, *Te Deum Laudamus*, and other services, confess this doctrine of the resurrection of our Lord, and cling to it as the pledge of our own in the last day : we are enabled, by the wise provision of the Church in her Liturgy and daily prayers, to realize in some degree the importance attached to this doctrine by St. Paul in the text, and the following verses : “ if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain ; if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins.”¹

Now, if these considerations be allowed to have their due influence, it will, I doubt not, be seen, that the resurrection is, as Bishop Horsley admirably terms it, “ the prop and pillar of the Christian’s hope,” or, as it were, the key stone of the arch of our most holy faith ; and you will be rightly disposed, in some measure at least, to enter with me upon what was previously mentioned as the object had in view, viz. to establish the *fact* of Christ’s resurrection from the dead, as related in the Scriptures. Viewed in this light, i. e. as a matter of fact, it is of course susceptible of proof, in the same way as other matters of fact are proved, viz. by unexceptionable testimony. It will be necessary, therefore, to show that the testimony on which the fact of the resurrection of

1) 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17.

our Lord Jesus Christ depends, is unexceptionable, clear, and convincing. It is true that the authenticity of the books of the New Testament will be taken for granted; not because there is the least room for doubt in this respect, or because it cannot easily be proved, but simply in order that we may have one prominent object on which to fix our attention. Were this a fitting opportunity, or did it accord with my present purpose, I might exhibit the poor and paltry cavils and objections of the mere sciolist, and half learned infidel, who "think every thing absurd which is *strange* to them, and call it unreasonable because *new* to their cramped understanding;"¹ but such a task may properly be deferred to another occasion. Assuming, then, that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear, and that the other books of the New Testament are the productions of those claiming to be the authors of them, we are enabled to examine and sift the evidence which they afford of the momentous truth, which St. Paul in the text makes absolutely essential to any ground of hope in another and a better life. Let us then proceed to the inquiry, concerning

I. The Witnesses of the Resurrection.

II. The Testimony which these witnesses give.

III. The Credibility or worthiness of belief of these witnesses.

If we are fully satisfied on all these points, and if it appear that the witnesses are perfectly well acquainted with the fact, and the attendant times and circumstances for which they vouch; that the testimony they give is full and clear to the point; and that they are worthy of entire confidence on our part, as men of unimpeached and unimpeachable character for honesty and veracity, I see not what more any reasonable man can ask, for removing his doubts or scruples, for confirming his faith in Christ, and for strengthening and quickening his hopes of eternity. We are then, to see who are

1) BP. WHITTINGHAM, *Parish Library*, Vol. I. Pref. p. xiv.

I. The Witnesses of the Resurrection.

By turning to the New Testament it will be found, that the main witnesses are the twelve Apostles, beside some others mentioned by St. Paul in the beginning of the chapter from which the text is taken: "Moreover, brethren, (he says,) I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."¹ The twelve Apostles were the special "witnesses chosen before of God,"² to testify to this fact; and on them and their testimony the cause is rested. But, it is asked, who are the twelve? Men in an humble station in life, and obliged to support themselves by daily labor; most of them fishermen; one a collector of taxes or customs; and all, beyond a doubt, men of good natural capacities, and devout and exemplary observers of the law of Moses, as it was taught in their day. In common with their countrymen, and many among the heathen, they had long been looking for the promised Messiah, and were ready to welcome Him whensoever He appeared. When Jesus Christ began His public ministry in order to gather in "the lost sheep of the house of Israel,"³ He called them to be His companions and disciples, that so they might be thoroughly furnished to give satisfactory and complete evidence of the truths

1) 1 Cor. xv. 1-8.

2) Acts x. 41.

3) Matt. x. 6.

which they were afterwards to proclaim ; and they left their all, their houses, kindred, and occupation, and followed Him. For three years and more, they waited on their Master ; they beheld the frequent and stupendous exhibitions of His love and compassion ; they listened to His heavenly teaching ; they treasured up His words and prophecies ; they journeyed with Him from village to village, from city to city, from province to province ; they were with Him on the sea and on the land, in the storm and in the calm, in the lonely desert and amid the crowded multitudes ; and, in fine, they were His never failing and continual attendants. Such men, with such opportunities, could not but be intimately well acquainted with the Incarnate Redeemer of the world, and excellently fitted for the duties incumbent upon them, after He had finished His mediatorial career upon earth. They could not be mistaken about what they saw, and heard, and felt.¹ Their senses could not be deceived in respect to healing the sick, cleansing the leper, stilling the raging of the storm, raising the dead to life, &c. They could speak that which they did know ; they could testify that which they had seen. Education and refinement might be wanting, yet good common sense was not, as is very evident from the writings which several of their number have left. Two of them have given us separate and unconnected accounts of our Lord's life, doctrines, ministry, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension ; all detailed with faithfulness and candor, with majestic simplicity of style, with no attempt at forestalling objections and cavils, with a full and free acknowledgment of their own faults, and follies, and mistakes ; and on the clear supposition that these things were not done in a corner, and were well known to many and most of those to whom they were writing. St. Matthew wrote, most probably, in the year of our Lord 41, or only about eight years after our Lord's ascension : and St. John, perhaps before the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70,—certainly before the end of the first century. The twelve, moreover, were well acquainted with the local-

1) 1 Jno. i. 1-3.

ities of their native land; and when they speak, they use language which evinces their knowledge of the subject. The various rites and ceremonies of the law were well known to them, as well as to all the pious Jews of their day. It is true, they partook largely of the prejudices so prevalent at that time; they thought that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince, was to conquer the nations of the world, restore the kingdom and dominion to Israel, and make Jerusalem the centre of His universal reign upon earth. Even till after our Lord's resurrection, they clung fondly to these early imbibed prejudices; and it was not until the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, that they were enlightened fully, and guided into all truth. Beside the twelve, there were many others who may be called witnesses of the resurrection. In the passage previously quoted from St. Paul, there are five hundred brethren spoken of, who saw our risen Lord in Galilee, as well as the great Apostle to the Gentiles himself: and in the Acts of the Apostles, we have mention also of about one hundred and twenty disciples, who had "compained with the twelve all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day in which He was taken up from them,"¹ out of which number one (i. e. Matthias) was "ordained to be a witness with them of His resurrection," in place of the apostate Judas. I do not now, in this account of the witnesses of the resurrection, think it meet to bring forward the attestation of the Holy Spirit, vouchsafed to the twelve and others, in proof of the facts to which they testified; not, however, because I would detract in the least from the overwhelming and conclusive evidence which was in this way afforded, God, as it were, setting His seal upon the truth of their declarations: O no; for I am well assured, that the Holy Ghost alone could give the Apostles ability to maintain so firmly, so steadily, and so universally, the *fact* of our Lord's rising from the dead; and that He alone could give them strength

1) Acts i. 15, 21, 22.

and perseverance, to contend successfully against the learning, prejudices, and power of the whole world:—my desire and intention are rather, to make this attestation of the Holy Spirit a special subject for our consideration and growth in grace, on another occasion.

There being by far too much to be said on the remaining points proposed, viz. "*the TESTIMONY, and the CREDIBILITY of these witnesses of the resurrection,*" for the short time of our present assembling in this house of God, I shall wait another convenient opportunity to lay the remainder of the case before you. In the meantime, let me affectionately urge upon you, to meditate upon the providence and wisdom of God, in His arrangements for the full and satisfactory proof of this essentially important truth of Christianity. We have gone only so far as to see who the witnesses are; and we have ascertained that they are twelve in number, who come forward, and offer to testify to the fact of the resurrection. They are men who have had every opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with the facts of the case; and all that they offer to do (and this most gladly), is to bear testimony, that they saw their Lord crucified, dead, and buried; and that they saw Him alive again on the third day after, as He had said. Such are the men, and as such they stand forth before us. Plain, unlettered, unskilled in this world's wisdom, unknown, and of a despised and hated race, they are ready to go through the world, and preach "Jesus and the resurrection;" simply because, as he died for the sins of all men, so He rose again to procure for, and bestow upon them, through His Spirit, pardon, peace and immortal life.¹ There is no court of justice among men, which would

1) "The greatest part, if not all, of the Apostles and disciples of Jesus, those at least who openly and avowedly followed Him, were men of low birth and mean occupations, illiterate, unaccustomed to deep inquiries and abstracted reasonings; men of gross minds, contracted notions, and strongly possessed with the selfish, carnal, and national prejudices of the Jewish religion, as it was then taught by the Scribes and Pharisees." Thus Mr. West, in his admirable Treatise on the Resurrection (*Parish Library*, Vol. I. p. 159): to the same effect is the statement of Rev. T. H. Horne, in his Introduction, &c. I would beg, however, to express, with due humility, the conviction that the language is

not be satisfied with a less number of competent witnesses ; there is none which could ask more. Two or three are enough to establish facts of the utmost importance, whereas here are twelve who attest the fact of the resurrection. While the positive and direct evidence is made stronger and fuller by this number of witnesses, the improbability of deception and falsehood is vastly increased. In providing this number, and in thoroughly furnishing them for the work which their Master sent them to do, we are enabled to see and I trust feel the goodness and mercy of God. Let it be our place as well as our privilege, to meditate upon the wondrous fact to which the Apostles gave evidence ; and let us remember that however astonishing, and however out of the ordinary and natural course of things, a resurrection from the dead may be, yet that it is a matter perfectly and entirely within the reach of the senses. If the Apostles had such opportunities of knowing their Master as we have seen they had, if they were perfectly familiar with His person and His appearance, and if they saw Him cruelly murdered and laid in the silent tomb, what reason is there, why, in two or three days after, they could not be as certain that He was alive, risen from the dead, as that He had been alive with them day by day, for years past ? It needed not learning, it needed not skill, it had no connection with philosophy, neither did it depend on any long train of reasoning ; it was a simple matter of fact, to which the plainest man, as well as the most learned, could bear sufficient and satisfactory testimony : the Apostles, we find, were skilled in neither the wisdom, nor learning, nor philosophy of the day.

overcharged, and that the argument gains nothing in force by any thing like extravagant expressions : Mr. H. says as follows : "Consider the *condition* of these witnesses : had they been men of opulence and credit in the world, we might have thought that their reputation gave currency to the fable. If they had been learned and eloquent men, we might have imagined that the style in which they had told the tale had soothed the souls of the people into a belief of it. But the *reverse* of all this was the fact ; for the Apostles were the lowest of mankind, without reputation to impose upon the people, without authority to compel, and without riches to reward. They were also mean, despised and unlearned men, and consequently very unequal to the task of imposing upon others."—Horne's *Introduction*, Vol. I. p. 288.

But they were by these circumstances no more unfitted to bear conclusive testimony that they saw and conversed with their Lord risen from the dead, than would the plainest or most unlettered man among us, that he sees any one of you or me, who are alive to-day, dead and buried, and in a few days alive again. To your private and serious reflection, then, I commend these witnesses, and beseech you to consider for what purpose it is that they are now brought before you, and in what way their testimony affects us and our condition. I pray you, ever remember the solemn saying of St. Paul; "if there be no resurrection of the dead then (of course) Christ is not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."



Easter.

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROVED.

1 COR. XV. 13, 14. —“If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

It will be remembered, I trust, that on a former occasion, the subject of the resurrection of our Lord was brought before you, and the importance of a well grounded and settled belief in this fundamental article of our most holy faith was urged, as a proper and indeed imperative reason why it should be fully and distinctly stated and proved. It will also be borne in mind, that the fact of the resurrection of our Saviour was proposed to be established in the same way that any other matter of fact is established, viz., by the testimony of competent and credible witnesses. It was my endeavor to show—and I trust, you, my brethren, were satisfied that I did show—who the witnesses of the resurrection are, and that by their situation and intimate connexion with our Lord, they were perfectly fitted to become competent witnesses of one of the most momentous facts in the history of man. The twelve Apostles being the witnesses, the special and authorized witnesses, and we, being assured of their competency, at least of their being in a situation in which they were enabled to become competent, let us continue the examination by seeing, what is

II. *The Testimony which these Witnesses give.*

They tell us, in the first place, what is essentially important to be known, what every one in their day well knew, and which we have no reason to doubt, viz., that their Master, the Messiah of God, was taken by wicked hands, condemned without a shadow of evidence against Him, and in open violation of all law and justice, to satisfy the infuriate clamors of the populace, cruelly and shamefully entreated, and at last made to suffer the death of a malefactor of the lowest class. Thus it is certain, He was *truly alive*; and as certain, that He was afterward *truly dead*. They go on to tell us, that the crucifixion occurred on Friday afternoon, or on the sixth day of the week, the day preceding the Sabbath—not an ordinary Sabbath—but the great paschal Sabbath;¹ that inasmuch as the bodies could not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, Joseph of Arimathea, one of our Lord's disciples, and a rich and good man, went to Pilate, the cruel and lawless governor, and obtained permission to bury the body of Jesus. This pious act he performed with the aid of Nicodemus, (the one who came to our Saviour by night,) and that of others of His followers.² They laid Him in a new tomb, hewn out of a rock, belonging to Joseph, "wherein was man never yet laid;" and they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. The next day being the Sabbath, "they rested according to the commandment."³ Towards its close, however, the chief priests and pharisees, through whose inveterate hatred and envy our Saviour was crucified, remembering and fearing the prediction which He uttered openly while alive, viz., that on the third day He would rise again, went to Pilate, and making this statement, obtained a guard of Roman soldiers,⁴

1) Jno xix. 31. 2) Luke xxiii. 55; Jno. xix. 38, 39. 3) Luke xxiii. 56.

4) "Sixty," says Abp. Sharp (Sermons II. 304), "for of so many a Roman *custodia* consisted;" so, also, Bp. Porteus's Lectures on St. Matthew, II. 326, ed. Lond. 1808. But Kuinoel, a late German commentator, (Comment. in Evangel. in loc.) says that a *κουστωδία*, by Roman usage, consisted of four quaternions

sixty or more in number, to watch the sepulchre, "lest (as they said) the disciples should come by night and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead."¹ They made all secure, in a way customary in that age, by sealing the stone, in order to prevent collusion or deception between the soldiers and disciples; and left the guard in charge of the sepulchre. Thus the Sabbath was ended;—and thus we are further assured that He, the crucified Redeemer, was *truly buried*. The next day, being the first day of the week, and the third (according to Jewish computation) after his crucifixion, these witnesses testify that our Lord rose from the dead. Early in the morning, very early, an angel descended from heaven, scattered the terrified soldiers, rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and the Lord of life and glory came forth; the same gracious and risen Lord once more appeared to gladden and re-assure the hearts of His disciples, overpowered with grief, and to afford to every pious heart the consolation and hope of a joyful resurrection at the last day.—It is freely acknowledged, that in the brief accounts of the resurrection of our Saviour published by St. Matthew and St. John, and in those by St. Mark and St. Luke, the two former being "eye-witnesses," the latter writing under the direction and with "the perfect understanding" derived from those who were eye-witnesses, there are discoverable some apparent discrepancies in the order of certain events, or in the precise period of time; still there is no doubt on one point, the resurrection did take place on the morning of the first day of the week. From the conciseness of the narratives which have come down to us, and from our ignorance of many circumstances which the Evangelists did not think it meet to mention, as not being at all necessary to establish the grand fact of the resurrection, it is not surprising that there are apparent difficulties in the several accounts. I shall not now attempt to harmonize the

of soldiers (or 16), watching alternately three hours each; for which he quotes Vegetius, an ancient writer on military affairs—WEST *On the Resurrection, Parish Library*, Vol. I. p. 179, note.

1) Matt. xxvii. 64.

various statements made in the Gospels ; this has been done by many eminent writers in a very satisfactory manner, but by none more so than by Gilbert West, Esq., in his excellent "Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ." It is enough to establish the fact to which they testify, that the witnesses agree fully and entirely in the main particulars, viz., that on the morning of the first day of the week, the sepulchre was found empty, the stone rolled away, the guard fled, and the body of Jesus gone ; and that on this same day they saw Him alive, they felt His hands and feet, He ate and drank with them, and He conversed freely with them ; thus affording "infallible proofs" that He was really and *truly alive again*. Nor is this the whole of their testimony : for they tell us, that during forty days after His resurrection, and before His ascension to heaven, He was "seen of them," and they were taught the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God."¹ How faithfully they have handed them down to us, let their laborious self-denying and consistent lives assure us, as they have done millions before us ; and let us weigh the testimony these witnesses give, with all the seriousness and carefulness which its important nature demands. Certainly it is clear and convincing ; it all goes directly to this one point, that as Jesus Christ was *truly alive*, then *truly dead* and *buried*, so He was *truly alive again*, or risen from the dead, as He had expressly predicted. In the language of a godly and learned Bishop of the seventeenth century : "That Jesus, whom we believe to be the true and only Messiah, did rise from the dead, according to the Scriptures, is a certain and infallible truth, delivered unto us, and confirmed by testimonies human, angelical, and divine. Those pious women which thought with sweet spices to anoint Him dead, found Him alive, 'held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him,' and as first preachers of His resurrection, with fear and great joy ran to bring His disciples word. The blessed Apostles follow them, to whom also 'He showed

1) Acts i. 3.

Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs,' who 'with great power gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus ;'¹ the principal part of whose office consisted in this testimony, as appeareth upon the election of Matthias into the place of Judas, grounded upon this necessity (Acts i. 21, 22). The rest of His disciples testified the same, to whom He also appeared, even to 'five hundred brethren at once.'² These were the witnesses of His own family, of such as worshipped Him, such as believed in Him. And because the testimony of an adversary is in such cases thought of greatest validity, we have not only His disciples, but even His enemies to confirm it. Those soldiers that watched at the sepulchre, and pretended to keep His body from the hands of His Apostles ; they which felt the earth trembling under them, and saw the 'countenance of an angel like lightning, and his raiment white as snow ;' they, who upon that sight 'did shake and became as dead men,' while He whom they kept became alive ; even some of these 'came into the city and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.' Thus was the resurrection of Christ confirmed by the highest human testimonies, both of His friends and enemies, of His followers and revilers."³ Hence it is difficult to see how the testimony which these witnesses give, can, with any show of reason, be evaded.⁴ If there

1) Acts i. 3 ; iv. 33.

2) 1 Cor. xv. 6.

3) BP. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 373, 4.

4) Now, for conclusion, all these things being considered, it is sufficiently apparent that this testimony is above all exception; that no matter of fact ever had, or well could have in any considerable respect, a more valid and certain proof: the greatest affairs in the world (concerning the rights and reputations, the estates and the lives of men) are decided by testimonies in all regards less weighty ; so that to refuse it is in effect to decline all proof by testimony ; to renounce all certainty in human affairs, to remove the grounds of proceeding surely in any business, or administration of justice ; to impeach all history of fabulousness, to charge all mankind with insufficiency, or extreme infidelity : (for if these persons were not able, or not honest enough, what men can ever be supposed such ; who can by greater arguments assure their ability or integrity in reporting any thing?) to thrust God away from bearing credible attestation in any case ; (for in what case did He ever or can He be conceived to yield an attestation more full or plain than He did in this? What farther can He perform needful to convince men endued with any competency of reason and

were any contradiction, any doubt or hesitation as to what they unanimously testify ; if it could be made to appear that they were not perfectly certain of the fact ; if it could be shown that they do not at all times and under all circumstances, assert the resurrection in the most positive and uncompromising manner, as something which they knew by the best of all evidence, viz., seeing, hearing, handling, addressing, and eating and drinking with their risen Lord ; if there were uncertainty in any of these respects, we might reasonably think less credit to be due to their evidence ; but so far from this being the case, as the acute and logical Archdeacon Paley remarks, "it is completely certain that the Apostles of Christ and the first teachers of Christianity asserted the fact (of the resurrection). And this would have been certain, if the four Gospels had been lost, or never written. Every piece of Scripture recognises the resurrection ; every Epistle of every Apostle ; every author contemporary with the Apostles, of the age immediately succeeding the Apostles ; every writing from that age to the present, genuine or spurious, on the side of Christianity or against it, concur in representing the resurrection of Christ as an article of His history, received without doubt or disagreement by all who call themselves Christians, as alleged from the beginning by the propagators of the institution, and alleged as the centre of their testimony. Nothing, I apprehend, which a man does not himself see or hear, can be more certain to him than this point."¹

Having now arrived at this stage of the examination, having seen who are the witnesses, and what is the testimony which they give, in the case in hand, I can hardly deem it advisable to go farther, without pausing awhile, and letting the evidence of the resurrection make its due and proper impression. The fact, undoubtedly, is one of the most won-

ingenuity, or to distinguish them from men of contrary dispositions, unreasonably and unworthily incredulous ?) in fine, to distrust this testimony is therefore in effect to embrace the vanity of the most wanton or wicked skeptic.—DR. BARROW'S *Works*, Vol. VI. p. 173.

1) PALEY'S "*Evidences*," &c. p. 197.

derful and momentous that could be brought before us. It is not an ordinary matter ; it is not something which we see or experience in the usual course of things ; neither is it what any of us would be likely or willing to believe, except on the most satisfactory evidence ; we want *more* and *clearer* evidence for this, than for any of the common or even extraordinary events of life, because it is of vastly more importance, not perhaps so much in itself alone considered, as in the consequences necessarily following from it :—and we may reasonably suppose that God will vouchsafe evidence sufficient to convince every candid and thinking man. Yet we are not by any means to suffer ourselves to give assent to the vain imagination of the infidel, that a different *kind* or *species* of evidence is required to establish the fact of the resurrection. This is not so ; we do require, it may be, a higher *degree* of evidence, but not a different *kind* ; for, as has been before remarked, a resurrection from the dead is perfectly within the reach and testimony of the senses ; and on them we depend for the truth and reality of the greater part of the occurrences of life ; we can be just as certain that one whom we saw dead, and buried, is alive again, as that he ever was alive at any time previous. The circumstance of death having intervened, and the soul and body having been separated for a short season, does not, and cannot in the least, take away from the value and certainty of the evidence of our senses. In making these remarks, I may seem to some of you to be over-anxious, or over-particular ; it may be thought that in addressing a Christian assembly, so great minuteness and fulness were hardly necessary ; if, however, it be borne in mind that infidelity in our day is rife in cavils and objections of a certain character, which it is my object in these discourses to answer and refute ; and that it is our duty to be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in us, it will, I doubt not, be seen that we ought to be well grounded in the faith we profess ; especially in respect of the fundamental article of the resurrection. Every well instructed man can in general answer at once, the specious pleas and objections of the deist ; but it

is not so with all; the majority of Christians, though perhaps well informed in other respects, are not always able to see the unsoundness and unfairness, to say the least, of what is put forth with great pretensions and great show of reason; and if no other object be accomplished but that of directing your thoughts to this subject, and of showing how fully and clearly the resurrection of Christ can be and is proved, I shall rejoice, and trust still in God that you may be built up in the true faith of His holy name. The testimony is now before you, and drawn out, as I hope and as I have endeavored, sufficiently at large to evince its strength and consistency. Are we prepared to believe and act upon it? doubtless, most of us will say that we are. But let us place ourselves in the situation of those who had first heard "Jesus and the resurrection" preached; let us, if we can, imagine what would be the effect produced upon us by seeing the witnesses of the resurrection, and hearing the testimony they give in support of its truth and reality. And let this be done, not for the purpose of gratifying the fancy, but with the sober intention of informing and quickening the heart and affections, and what would probably be the result? what *was* the result in the first ages of Christianity? the fact *then* was as astonishing and important as it is *now*; and yet thousands and millions believed and embraced the Gospel, on the testimony which has just been laid before you; so that St. Paul could use this strong language to the Colossians,¹ "the Gospel which ye have heard, was preached to every creature which is under heaven." If the Apostles were now to preach "Jesus and the resurrection" among us, what would be the effect? more, it may be, would be aroused to a sense of their eternal interests; more, perhaps, would give heed to the monitions of the Holy Spirit, and believe and obey. But though these chosen witnesses have gone to their account, and we no more hear their living voice sounding in our ears, yet they speak to us as distinctly, and as pointedly, as though they stood in bodily form in our

1) Col. i. 23.

midst. They have left to us a "sure word" of testimony ; they have declared unto us how that Jesus, the Saviour, having died to atone for the sins of the whole world, rose again from the dead, to perfect his mission on earth, and to procure the aid of the Holy Spirit : and they state, in full, the time, the place, the attendant circumstances, and the astonishing results. They sealed their testimony with their life's blood : they died martyrs to the fact of the resurrection. What more could be desired ? how could testimony be more complete ? if they are credible witnesses (as I shall hereafter show), what more could be done to assure us of the truth ? Do men ask miracles ? do they demand that we who preach the resurrection should attest it by miraculous power and effects ? This is the height of presumption and folly : it is asking what God has never vouchsafed to man, whom He has constituted a free moral agent, and placed here in a state of probation ; and what we cannot suppose that He ever will vouchsafe in order merely to satisfy "unreasonable and wicked men." Once he sent forth His Apostles to proclaim the glad tidings of a risen and Almighty Saviour ; and was pleased to endue them by His Spirit with miraculous power, to display the might of His hand, and His stretched-out arm, and to convince the world that their work and mission was of God. Having done this once, it were derogatory to His character, and in contrariety to the analogy of all His other dealings with men, to ask more. The ten thousands and millions who, in the first ages of Christianity, believed on the testimony of the Apostles, are so many witnesses to us of its truth ; and if we did but rightly consider, we can be even more certain than our brethren in Christ seventeen hundred years ago, of the fact of the resurrection, because age after age, generation after generation in the Christian ranks, have added to the myriads of those who witness to us the truth, reality, and life-giving efficacy of the Apostles' preaching. Though we are left to the ordinary mode of establishing the facts of former days, the evidence is not in this way lessened in value ; for the constant testimony of the Church, in whose ranks we are enrolled, is

a standing proof that Christ has risen from the dead ; to which testimony men will do well if they give good heed, "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." Once more, then, let me say, the testimony is before you, and before all in our land ; let us weigh it well ; for as our Blessed Redeemer has said, "if men hear not Moses and the prophets, (if they hear and believe not those whom He has sent,) neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."¹

1) Luke xvi. 31.



Easter.

SERMON XVIII.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROVED.

1 COR. xv. 13, 14.—“If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”

ON two previous Sunday mornings your attention, my brethren, has been called to the subject of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; which has been considered specially as a matter of fact, to be established by unexceptionable testimony. It was said, that in order to a full and satisfactory understanding of the whole subject, inquiry ought to be made concerning three points: *First*, the WITNESSES of the Resurrection; *Second*, the TESTIMONY which they give; and *Third*, the CREDIBILITY or worthiness of belief of these witnesses. The two former have been set forth at large, or rather as much at large as time and opportunity would allow. Bearing in mind, then, that the fact of which we are discoursing depends upon the testimony of the twelve Apostles, which testimony (as has been shown) is fully sufficient to convince every reasonable man provided the witnesses are worthy of belief, I purpose now to call your attention to the last point, which is

III. *The CREDIBILITY of the Apostles.*

This is the more important, because of the shameless and unmanly usage which they have met with at the hands

of infidels, and self-styled freethinkers, who have thought no term too base or scurrilous, no motives too vile, no statements too disgraceful, to be attributed to these holy men of God. I shall therefore most cheerfully, and at once, proceed to the vindication of the Apostles' testimony to the fact for which they died, and for which, if need be, we are called upon to die. Let it be premised, that it is of the highest consequence in every case, that we be well assured that the witnesses are worthy of belief; for "nothing, (says the profound logician, Bishop Butler,) nothing can destroy the evidence of testimony in any case but a proof or probability that persons are not competent judges of the facts to which they give testimony, or that they are actually under some indirect influence in giving it, in such particular case. Till this be made out, the *natural* laws of human actions require that testimony be admitted."¹ In order, then, to give credit to the testimony of a witness, we must be assured of two things, viz. *First*, That he has perfect knowledge of the facts which he evidences; and *Secondly*, That his character is fair and unblemished.

First; We shall be satisfied that the chosen witnesses of the resurrection had perfect knowledge of this fact, if we consider that it was one about which they could not be deceived; that it was not until evidence upon evidence was brought before them that they would believe; and that they are above all suspicion of enthusiasm.

1. I say that the Apostles could not be deceived about the fact of the resurrection. For three years or more they had waited upon our Lord and Master. They had listened to His instructions, they had journeyed with Him in His ministry, they had seen His miracles, and could not be mistaken in the person of One on whom they had so long and so constantly attended. Surely, the countenance of the mild and benignant Saviour could not easily be forgotten by His companions and disciples; and no man, unless he be thoroughly encased with prejudice, can for a moment sup-

pose that One whom they loved and revered, whom they honored and adored, was not well known to them, so that they could be certain that it was He. His voice, His look, His gesture, all were familiar to them, and by these He was known. They assisted at our Lord's burial; they saw the sepulchre in which He was laid; they beheld Him dead, having suffered a most excruciating and ignominious death; and, in their great consternation and amazement, with Him died all their hopes and expectations. The nails that pierced His hands and His feet, the crown of thorns that bound His head, the spear that had been thrust into His side, all left marks on which they gazed with sorrowing hearts and eyes overflowing with tears, but which they could never forget. In view of all this, I ask, was it possible for the Apostles to be deceived in regard to the person of their Master?

2. Still further: We know how "slow of heart to believe" were these chosen witnesses; how backward and unwilling to give credence to a fact which filled their minds with wonder and joy; and we are told with what merciful compassion our Lord bore with their hardness and dulness, and gave them such full and complete evidence of the reality of His resurrection, that they could no longer entertain a doubt. First He taught them this great truth by the report of the women, who went very early in the morning to embalm the body of their Lord, and were told by angels that He was risen from the dead; then Peter and John ran in haste to the sepulchre, but found not the body there. The disciples had not removed it, neither of course had the Jews. St. John "believed," but Peter and the rest of the eleven "wondered" and doubted. The same day Jesus appeared to two disciples, as they went to Emmaus, a village about three-score furlongs from Jerusalem; and "was known of them in breaking of bread." Immediately they returned to Jerusalem, and told the eleven assembled together, that they had seen the Lord; and were informed by them that He was "risen indeed, and had appeared to Simon."¹ Our Lord

1) Luke xxiv. 34, 35.

that same evening appeared to "the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen;"¹ but even though they *saw* Him, they did not believe; they thought they had seen a spirit. But He showed them His hands and His feet, and said, "It is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have:" while even yet "they believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it and did eat before them."² Thus every doubt was dispelled. Eight days after this, our Lord condescended again to visit the disciples, in order to satisfy the unreasonable scruples of St. Thomas, who would not believe except on the evidence of his own senses. He must not only *see*, but also put his "finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into His side;" and Jesus bade him do it, "and be not faithless but believing."³ For forty days subsequent to this, He appeared from time to time to the Apostles, sometimes partaking of their meals, discoursing with them upon the propagation of the Gospel, and showing Himself alive by many infallible proofs. Thus proof upon proof was multiplied upon them. They had "*first*, the testimony of those 'who had seen Him after He was risen;' *secondly*, the evidences of their own senses; *thirdly*, the exact accomplishment of the 'words which He had spoken to them, while He was yet with them;' and *fourthly*, 'the fulfilling of all the things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Him.'"⁴

3. It will not be necessary to say much in order to clear the Apostles of the absurd charge of enthusiasm; absurd, I say, because it is a mere subterfuge, and utterly unworthy of men who profess to seek for truth, and to be guided by reason. Enthusiasm has to do with opinions, feelings, senti-

1) Mark xvi. 14.

2) Luke xxiv. 39-43.

3) John xx. 25, 27.

4) WEST *On the Resurrection*, p. 210, Vol. I. Parish Library.

ments, not with plain matters of fact made known to us by our senses. No doubt a man may persuade himself that certain tenets of his own or others are true and reasonable, and in the warmth of an excited imagination, may think that he sees and hears things, which have no existence save in his own distempered fancy. For these tenets and peculiarities he may be willing to undergo hardships, and dangers, and persecution, yea, even to die a martyr's death; but never has it been known, nay, it is utterly contradictory to the first principles on which we act in common life, that a man believes that he sees, and hears, and touches, and converses, and eats and drinks with, and examines the person of, a being like to himself, when all this is a mere phantasm of a disordered brain. Enthusiasts are very much like other men where facts are concerned; facts, I mean, which come under the cognizance of the senses; for though "many of them have mistaken the reveries of a heated imagination for the communications of the Divine Spirit, yet never in one single instance did they mistake the operations of their external senses."¹ In the case of the resurrection, it is undeniable that the sepulchre was empty; and the Jews, as their only resource, manufactured a senseless story, to be supported by men who were *asleep* when the event was said to have taken place, viz., that the disciples came by night and stole away the body of Jesus. "What account can be given of the *body* on the supposition of enthusiasm? It is impossible our Lord's followers could believe that He was risen from the dead, if His corpse was lying before them. No enthusiasm ever reached to such a pitch of extravagancy as that: a spirit may be an illusion; a body is a real thing, an object of sense, in which there can be no mistake. All accounts of spectres leave the body in the grave. And although the body of Christ might be removed by *fraud*, and for the purposes of fraud, yet without any such intention, and by sincere but deluded men, (which is the representation of the apostolic character we are now examining,)

1) CAMPBELL. *On Miracles*, Part II. Sect. 1.

no such attempts could be made. The presence and the absence of the dead body are alike inconsistent with the hypothesis of enthusiasm; for if present, it must have cured their enthusiasm at once; if absent, fraud, not enthusiasm, must have carried it away."¹

Secondly; Having shown that the Apostles had perfect knowledge of the facts which they attest, I shall need to examine but one point more in order to establish their credibility, and the supposition of *fraud* alluded to by Archdeacon Paley, naturally leads us to this examination. If we consider the *circumstances* of the case, the *professions*, and the *practice* of these chosen witnesses, we shall be satisfied that their character is fair and unblemished.

1. No men were ever less likely to invent and endeavor to palm upon the world an imposture, so incongruous and contradictory as the Gospel is, on the hypothesis of skeptics and deists; and in the very nature of things it was wholly impossible. The city of Jerusalem, the holy city, to which not only the Jews of Palestine, but of all surrounding nations, (Acts ii. 9, 10, 11,) annually flocked in large numbers, this city, at the time of the celebration of the Passover, the great feast of the Jews, when it was crowded with people, was made the scene of the resurrection of our Divine Lord and Master. If an imposture—how absurd and senseless! not even the poor merit of telling a tale worthy a moment's consideration! how reckless must have been the inventors

1) PALEY's *Evidences*, p. 199. See, also, WEST *On the Resurrection*, p. 283, and BP. PORTEUS's *Evidences*, p. 36, 37.

One would naturally think that the foretelling His resurrection, and giving such public notice to expect it, that His keenest enemies were fully apprized of it, carried with it the greatest mark of sincere dealing; it stands thus far clear of the suspicion of fraud, and had it proceeded from enthusiasm, and an heated imagination, the dead body at least would have rested in the grave, and without further evidence have confuted such pretensions; and since the dead body was not only carried openly to the grave, but there watched and guarded, and yet could never afterwards be found, never heard of more as a dead body, there must of necessity have been either a real miracle, or a great fraud in this case; *enthusiasm* dies with the man, and has no operation on his dead body; there is therefore here no medium, you must either admit the miracle or prove the fraud.—BP. SHERLOCK's *Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection*, p. 31.

and principal actors in this attempted imposition ! how perfectly certain of bringing shame and confusion on their own heads, and of meeting and deserving the scorn and contempt of all men ! Impostors, generally, take not leave of their senses, nor suppose that mankind are so credulous as the infidel sneeringly represents the Christian community. They go, like Mohammed, to some cave, and pretend to have communications and revelations from the Deity ; and give but their bare *word* for what they say they have seen, and heard, and require. They never base their pretensions upon facts which can be proved. Their oftentimes sickening and absurd stories, their miserable and futile attempts to do something which their credulous followers may think almost a miracle, their petty and slavish requirements, and their keeping their deluded disciples in gross ignorance, and fostering low superstition, all are too sure proofs of imposture. They *dare* not do what the Apostles did without fear of contradiction, viz., appeal to *their enemies* in support of the truth of their claims, and of the facts they promulged. The time of the resurrection, and the circumstances connected with it, were matters which thousands of Jews must have known, and certainly been able to contradict, were they mere pretence, were they not matters of perfect notoriety. I stop not now to remark upon that strange inconsistency, I ought perhaps rather to say, that wilful obstinacy, which can lead men claiming to be guided by *reason*, to believe that twelve men, without influence, or education, or skill beyond the ordinary concerns of life, could bring immense numbers of their own countrymen, not merely in their own station in society, but priests, and wise men, and rulers, to yield assent to what they proclaimed, and frame their lives in accordance therewith, even though suffering and death were before their eyes, when all was a mere tissue of lying vanity and imposture :—I say, how strange that men can believe in such a result on the supposition of trickery and juggling deceit ! Must not the faith of such be an easy one indeed ?

2. The character of the Apostles and followers of our Lord was too pure and elevated, too much like that of Him

who was "without sin," for even cavilling and bitter enemies to find fault with. Though this is a strong reason for believing them honest, candid, and sincere, we have yet something more which places the matter beyond question. Their professions and their teachings were based on principles of the highest moral excellence. Truth in all things, such as the God of truth requires, was what they professed and taught. "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor." "Lie not one to another." "Lie not against the truth." "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth,"¹ etc. Loving our neighbor as ourselves, doing to others as we would they should do to us, truly "the golden rule," forgiving our enemies and praying for them, returning good for evil, being modest, sober, and chaste in our conversation and intercourse with the world, being obedient and affectionate to our parents, honoring and cherishing her who is the partner of our joys and sorrows, and watchful over the best interests of our children and all dependent upon us, being temperate in all things, and following in the "steps of Him who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously; who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness;"² these were the elevating and ennobling teachings of the Apostles. They warned all men who would live godly, to expect tribulation: they promised no exemption from troubles and trials incident to our fallen state; and they proclaimed a judgment to come, in which God would judge the world by Jesus Christ; so that the wicked, who have here escaped punishment, shall find no escape there, and the righteous, who in this state of probation have suffered torment, and anguish, and misery, shall there obtain their due and merited reward.

3. Yet, though such were the principles they professed, as contained in their writings now in our hands, it must be

1) Eph. iv. 25; Col. iii. 9; Jam. iii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 22.

2) 1 Pet. ii. 22-24.

granted that a man's professions alone are not to be trusted ; they are no proof of his excellence or sincerity. Many professions of virtue and goodness may be made, and regard may be had that their ordinary practice do not contradict these professions, and yet, for all, men may be hypocrites and deceivers. Now, how are we to know that the Apostles did not merely put on the garb of religion and morality, in order to accomplish some ulterior object ?¹ Because they *practised* to the fullest extent the truths which they taught. They sought no honors and emoluments ; they would receive none. They left all they possessed, home, kindred, country, and friends, to preach the "unsearchable riches of Christ." They encountered dangers and suffered persecutions ; they were beaten with rods, cast into dungeons, and made, as it were, the "offscourings of all men." They travelled from

1) Farther, they (the Apostles) were persons of good sense ; yea, very wise and prudent ; not in way of worldly or fleshly wisdom, in skill to contrive or compass projects of gain, honor, or pleasure to themselves ; to the commendation of them and of their testimony they disclaimed being wise or skilful that way ; having no practice therein, nor caring for it, (for they looked not much on things temporal and transitory ; they did not mind earthly things ; they had not their conversation or interest here, but above, as citizens of another world, deeming themselves but as sojourners and pilgrims here,) but endued they were with a wisdom as in itself far more excellent, so more suitable to the persons sustained ; with great perspicacity and sound judgment in the matters they discoursed about and in the affairs they pursued ; such their writings, according to the acknowledgment of innumerable most wise and learned persons, fraught with admirable wisdom and heavenly philosophy, (rude indeed and simple in expression, but most exact and profound in sense,) do manifest them to have been ; such the tenor of their doctrine evidenced them, shining with that lustre and beauty, compacted with that strength and harmony, that whoever will not confess it to have proceeded from God, must, upon consideration however allow, that it could not have been devised by idiots or mean persons, but did come from persons of much subtilty and great research : they must be no fools who could frame a religion merely by its own plausibility, without any external help, able to supplant all the religions in the world ; and to stand durably firm upon the foundations laid by them. Such also the notable conduct of their great affair, (notwithstanding so mighty disadvantages and difficulties,) together with the prodigious efficacy their endeavors had upon men, do evince them to have been ; they surely could not be weak men, who, in a plain and peaceable way, confounded all the wit and policy, all the learning and eloquence, all the force and violence that withstood them. Experience did attest the truth of what St. Paul saith, Acts vi. 10 ; 1 Cor. i. 27 ; 2 Cor. x. 4.—DR. BARROW'S *Works*, Vol. VI. p. 161.

city to city, from nation to nation, throughout the known world. They disclaimed power, pre-eminence, and authority, save as the ministers of the cross and the messengers of the Lord of Hosts: and in all their lives and conversation they exemplified those principles on which they professed to act. To use the strong language of West, "That any men who firmly believed that God would punish them for speaking an untruth, though for the advancement of a good cause, should at the hazard of their lives and without any prospect of gain or advantage, assert facts which they at the same time knew to be false; should, for instance, affirm that they saw and conversed with Jesus Christ after His resurrection, knowing or believing that He was not risen from the dead, and yet expect to be judged hereafter by that very same Jesus, is too improbable to gain credit with any but those great believers of absurdities, the infidels and skeptics."¹

Enough, surely, has been said to demonstrate the credibility of the chosen witnesses of the resurrection; and it may well excite wonder and regret that man will so obstinately withstand conviction of the truth as it is in Jesus. What more could be done for us than has already been done? I have shown that the witnesses of the resurrection were plain and unlettered men, incapable of forming and attempting to impose upon the world a system of alleged facts, doctrines, and precepts, which are more sublime, more excellent, and more worthy of commendation, than all the united wisdom and learning of philosophers and sages of every clime and period. I speak but the language of sober and chastened truth, for I know that men of the greatest talents, most deeply versed in the lore of ancient times, thoroughly masters of the range of science and philosophy, men in all respects capable of feeling and appreciating the full force and extent of any subject presented to them, have bowed in humble submission and childlike confidence to the teachings of those who preached Jesus and the resurrection.² I have also

1) WEST *On the Resurrection*, p. 234, Vol. I. Parish Library.

2) The most eminent defenders of Christianity in its early ages were men eminent in philosophical attainments, and their names, if not associated with

shown that the Apostles were intimately acquainted with their Master, and for several years had been His constant attendants; moreover, that the testimony they give is very clear and consistent, and bears upon the face of it the marks of truth. They could not be deceived as to their Master's person; they were in no hurry, nay, they were exceedingly backward to credit the resurrection; and most assuredly could not be enthusiasts, when their senses made them sure that their risen Lord was before them. I have shown, lastly, that their character is above suspicion, that their honesty and veracity are beyond question, and that they are worthy our entire confidence. Of course it inevitably follows from all this, that the resurrection is a fact, and one better supported, and more conclusively proved, than any in profane history, ancient or modern.

My beloved brethren, suffer a parting word of exhortation. You cannot for a moment seriously imagine that I have sought merely to establish the fact of the resurrection of our Lord, without special regard being had to the momentous and eternal consequences involved in its truth and reality. O no; it were to little purpose to know that about eighteen hundred years ago, One rose from the dead, if being assured of this, we pass it by as something with which we of the present day have little or no concern. Profitless, indeed, will it be to be convinced of the fact, if that is all; and utterly valueless will it prove to assent to it simply as a matter of history, or as a part of the records of antiquity. Nay, if the resurrection come not home to us as a matter in which we are personally concerned, in which each and every individ-

the cause of Christianity, would have been high in the roll of heathen fame. In later times the very highest order of intellectual endowment is found in believers, sincere and humble believers, in revelation. Boerhaave, Haller, Mede, and Sloane, among physicians; Bacon, Coke, and Hale, among lawyers; Boyle, Newton, and Davy, among natural philosophers; Locke, Beattie, Read, and Stewart, among metaphysicians; Pascal, Ward, and Barrow, among mathematicians. Can names standing higher than these in the lists of successful votaries of science be produced? Yet where can more fast, more devout disciples of Christianity, be found?—BR. WHITTINGHAM, *Parish Library*, Vol. I. p. xiii.

ual is deeply interested, if we do not in some measure realize that on it hangs our only hope of rising from the dead to inherit immortal life, so far from benefitting us, it will appear in judgment against us and aggravate our eternal condemnation. "Know we not that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in *newness of life*?" Such must be the result to which our knowledge of this great fact in the Christian scheme leads, or it will only pierce us through with many sorrows; wherefore, I entreat you, be not deceived. Seek to know aright what it is to die unto sin, and to rise again unto righteousness. Count no knowledge of Scripture truth profitable which tends not to your increase in holiness, and in the gifts and graces of the Christian life; and that you may, by the blessing of the Holy Ghost, grow in grace day by day, let me beseech you to meditate much and often upon this fundamental article of faith, remembering always, in the language of a bishop of other days, in whom learning, eloquence, fervor of devotion, and love to our Master, were brightly conspicuous, that "the resurrection is the great article upon which we rely, and which Christ took so much care to prove and ascertain to so many persons, because if that should be disbelieved with which all our felicities are to be received, we have nothing to establish our faith, or entertain our hope, or satisfy our desires, or make retribution for that state of secular inconveniences in which, by the necessities of our nature and the humility and patience of our religion, we are engaged."¹

1) BP. JEREMY TAYLOR'S *Works*, Vol. I. p. 347.



Ascension Day.

SERMON XIX.

TRIALS PRECEDE REWARDS.

2 TIM. ii. 11, 12.—“ If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him ; if we suffer we shall also reign with Him.”

Not long since, we were occupied in meditating specially upon the great and glorious Resurrection of Christ, and in seeking to draw down from heaven the rich blessings consequent upon it, to His people. The Church, meanwhile, has pointed us to this grand event, and to the promise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, in the Epistles and Gospels, and in the various services appointed for the Sundays after Easter : and now, on this “ Holy Thursday,” we are assembled for the purpose of commemorating the Ascension into heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, which ascension, together with His session at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, forms one of the fundamental articles of “ our most holy faith.” It needs not, at this time, to dwell upon the *fact* of the Ascension into heaven, save only to assure you that it is based on the same testimony, and substantiated by the same irrefragable evidence, as that on which rests the entire faith of the Christian ;¹ we cannot separate between the Ascension and

1) We believe that Christ in His human nature (the Apostles looking on) ascended into heaven. And the assurance we have of Christ’s ascension, is derived from the evidence of the word, the testimony of heavenly angels and holy men. (Luke xxiv. 51 ; Acts i. 9.) He did ascend into heaven, because He had finished His Father’s work on earth (Jno. xvii. 3-5), and that being ex-

the Resurrection of our Lord ; we cannot separate between the Resurrection and the atoning sacrifice on the cross ; we cannot separate between Christ crucified and the great and awful mystery of the incarnation of God our Saviour ; nay, so indissolubly bound together are the articles of the Christian faith, that if we doubt or disbelieve one, it is in effect to doubt or disbelieve all ; and if it can be shown that one is false, the Gospel scheme becomes a mere nullity ; and, as St. Paul so pointedly declares, “ our preaching is vain, our faith is vain and worthless, we are yet in our sins, and they who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.”—Thus assuring ourselves of the great value of a right and due apprehension of this leading truth of Christianity, let us pass by, for the present, the consideration of the fact, looked at simply as a fact, and endeavor to follow humbly and gladly the guidance of the Church, who has taught us to pray, that “ like as we do believe the only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens ; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell.”¹

But how is this great end to be attained ? by what means shall we, who feel the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortify the works of the flesh and our earthly members, and draw up our minds to high and heavenly things ? in what way

alted in our nature, He might consecrate a way, prepare a place (Jno. xiv. 2, 3), and appear in the presence of God to make intercession for us. (Heb. ix. 24.) The benefits He did bestow upon His Church at His ascension, were, that He triumphed over His enemies, gave gifts to His friends ; and taking with Him a pledge of our flesh, He sent and left with us the earnest of His Spirit. (Eph. iv. 8 ; Heb. x. 12, 20 ; 2 Cor. v. 5 ; Acts ii. 33.) And this comfort doth hence arise to God's children, 1. That our Head being gone before, we His members shall follow after ; Christ having prepared a place for us in heaven, which now we feel by faith, and hereafter shall fully enjoy. (Eph. i. 22, 23 ; 1 Cor. xv. 49 ; Jno. xiv. 3 ; xvii. 24.) 2. That having such a Friend in heaven, we need not fear any foes on earth, nor fiends in hell. (Heb. vii. 25 ; Phil. i. 23 ; Rom. xvi. 20 ; Acts xx. 24 ; Rev. ii. 10.) And the fruits we are to show in our lives from the virtue of His ascension in our hearts, are, 1. To have our conversation in heaven whilst we be on earth ; placing our hearts where our Head is. (Col. iii. 1, 2 ; Phil. i. 23 ; iii. 20.) 2. To look for the presence of Christ by faith, not by sight ; in spiritual, not in carnal things. (Matt. xxviii. 20 ; 2 Cor. v. 7 ; Jno. vi. 63.)—ABP. USHER's *Body of Divinity*, p. 223. Lond. Ed. 1841.

1) Collect for the Ascension Day.

shall we seek to set our affections on things above, and to realize that we are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God?"¹ The aged and affectionate Apostle St. Paul will give us the required information. We must die with Christ; we must suffer, as all Christians have to suffer; there must be a real dying unto sin, as the first step; there must be manifold and great tribulations and trials passed through by those who are strangers and pilgrims on the earth: thus, and thus only shall we live with Christ, here and hereafter; thus, and thus only shall we reign with Him in unspeakable and eternal glory.—Let us, however, look at this matter more closely. What are we to understand by being "dead with Christ?" what does the Apostle mean when he expects us to "suffer," as well as to die, with Christ?

1. Being dead with Christ is a form of speaking not unusual in Holy Scripture. "Know ye not (says the same Apostle to the Romans) that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death:" "we have been planted together in the likeness of His death."² The thing signified by the figure here used is more plainly expressed in other places: "our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin:"³ "put off the body of the sins of the flesh:"⁴ "reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."⁵ Now, I think it evident that there is little or no difficulty in comprehending the substantial truth involved in the expression, "dead with Christ;" for it certainly teaches us that the Christian cannot be a habitual or wilful sinner.—I say not that the best and holiest child of God, even when he has done all, is any thing more than an "unprofitable servant," for in truth he is not; but at the same time it must never be forgotten, that though we may not and

1) Eph. ii. 19.

2) Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5.

3) Rom. vi. 6.

4) Col. ii. 11.

5) Rom. vi. 11, 12.

cannot attain unto perfection in this life ; yet we may, and we can, and we must aim at perfection, we must strive after perfection. The Christian may indeed fall seven times a day¹ (as says the wise king) ; he may be guilty of sins of omission and commission ; and through the frailty of his nature, and the temptations to which he is subjected, he may be drawn into sin ; yet it is not willingly ; he does not deliberately set about transgression ; he does not carelessly and knowingly do despite unto the Spirit of grace ; nay, while he confesses himself a “ miserable sinner,” yet he is a repentant sinner ; he does really believe, though it may be that in anguish of spirit he cries with the afflicted father to the Almighty Saviour, “ Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief ;”² and he does try heartily to obey in all things. The world, the flesh, and the devil, make their assaults upon him, and sometimes prostrate him to the earth ; yet, putting his trust in God, he is lifted up again by unseen strength from on high, and God giveth him the victory through Jesus Christ. His affections are not set on things in this world ; he knows that here he has no continuing city ; the pleasures of sin for a season, in his estimation, are not to be compared with the glory and bliss reserved in heaven for the faithful followers of the cross ; and his earnest prayer, day by day, and his constant endeavor are to look away from and forget this perishing world, seeking to live in continual preparation for death and judgment, with a realizing sense of that solemn truth, that his Lord cometh in an hour when he looketh not for Him. Thus to be “ dead with Christ ” means that we are to die unto all that is opposed to Him ; that we are to be as little alive to sin of any kind, as a dead man is to this material world ; and that, as a necessary consequence, being risen with Christ, we are to seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

2. “ If we suffer ” (continues the Apostle), “ we shall also reign with Him.” In great measure this is included in the comprehensive expression, “ if we be dead with Christ.”

1) Prov. xxiv. 16.

2) Mark ix. 24.

The dying unto sin and living unto righteousness are not unattended with pain and suffering, are not so easy as some would imagine: yet, lest we should possibly err, or think that we are to be exempt from suffering; lest we should suppose that God, in bringing many sons unto glory, meant that any should be freed from bitter trials, the Apostle makes this matter a distinct topic of discourse. Hence, we must not only be dead unto sin, but we must "suffer" as Christians: in some way or other we shall certainly suffer; if not, as the Apostles and early Christians did, by fire and sword, by cruel mockings and scourgings, by bonds and imprisonment, by being stoned, by being sawn asunder, by wandering about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, by being destitute, afflicted, tormented, by wandering in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth;¹ if not in any of these ways, yet in some other we shall be called upon to suffer for Christ; for we cannot pass through the world without trial and suffering. It is the arrangement of God that thus it should be, in order that our faith may be tried of what sort it is; and in order that we may show the reality and sincerity of our faith by the fruits of holiness in our hearts and lives. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."² It is only through much tribulation that we can enter into the kingdom of God;³ and the Christian verily finds it so. No one but he who has tried it, knows how many persecutions and tribulations come upon the humble and faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus: no one can tell of the multitude of evil thoughts which rush unbidden and unwelcome upon the soul; of the unholy propensities which are a continual thorn in our sides; or of the host of spiritual enemies which beset the Christian's path toward Zion, and strive to intimidate or force him from his onward course. No one but a Christian knows what a trial it is to live in the midst of an evil and ungodly world; to be troubled on every side, "fightings without and fears within;"⁴ to bear with the taunts and sneers of the profane and vicious, or the cold and

1) Heb. xi. 36-38. 2) 2 Tim. iii. 12. 3) Acts xiv. 22. 4) 2 Cor. vii. 5.

cutting sarcasms of the merely moral man, about being "righteous overmuch," or the supercilious contempt which the worldly-wise man entertains for such pitiful delusions ; and in all cases to return good for evil ; blessing for cursing, railing, or evil speaking ; kindness and good deeds for persecution, &c. No one but the servant of Christ knows how hard it is, in the present unhappily divided state of Christendom, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, to stand fast in the faith, to quit us like men, to be strong, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel ;—no one, I say, but the Christian can realize what it is to leave father and mother, and wife and children ; to be severed from the nearest and dearest friends and relatives, for conscience sake ; and marking them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and avoiding them, to take up the cross of Christ, and bear it through good report and through evil report, faltering not, wavering not, neither lured from our steadfastness by the enticing voice of friends or kindred, nor moved from our straightforward course by fierce assaults or bitter revilings.—So true is it that we must "suffer ;" and so various and so anguishing are the trials and tribulations of those who will live godly and faithfully in this present world ; yet, blessed be God, who enables His people to do all things through Christ strengthening them, none of these things, neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, are able to separate the Christian from the love of Christ, or induce him to waver in his steadfast adherence to the Gospel of the Redeemer, as ever held by the Church, which He purchased with His blood. He has learned that wholesome lesson that the servant is not above his master, nor the disciple above his lord. If his Master and Lord suffered persecution, and revilings, and railings, and agony, and death ; shall he expect to be delivered from all or any of these ? Nay, it is enough if the servant be as his master and the disciple as his lord ;¹—wherefore, let no one who bears the name of Christian hope to escape suffering in this state of probation.

1) Matt. x. 24, 25.

Having thus considered, briefly, what it is to die with Christ, and to suffer as a Christian; let us now turn our attention to, and fill our souls with, the consoling promise annexed to all this. "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." And is it so, that we shall LIVE and shall REIGN with Him? O what words of glowing comfort are these! "live with Christ!" then shall all be pure and blissful within; no distressing fears, no anguishing dread, no pain, no sorrow, no grief; but an eternal sunshine, a never-ending day of joy and peace: then shall we "live" indeed; freed from the clogs of mortality, and released from the weakness and blindness of this state of childhood, our faculties and powers shall be enlarged, our capabilities for happiness increased beyond imagination to conceive, and instead of being pent up in this little spot of earth, it may be that on angels' wings we shall range the boundless universe. What is life worth if the brief term of existence here be all? and who shall estimate the value of eternal life? who can realize what ETERNITY is? a word which expresses something of which we can have no adequate idea; and though we may add words to words, and may think perhaps that we can grasp the idea of infinite duration, yet we shall lose ourselves in the attempt; it is not for finite man to conceive the infinite: therefore, while we are humbled by a sense of our weakness and inefficiency, let us hold fast to that gladsome truth, in unwavering trust and confidence, viz., because He lives; because He, the incarnate, crucified, risen, and glorious Lord, lives; we shall live also. But, not only shall we live, "we shall also reign with Him." We shall be kings and priests unto God. When our sufferings shall be over, our toil and labor done, our course through this world finished; when we shall have fought the good fight of faith, having endured hardness as becomes the soldiers of the cross; when we shall have vanquished the foe, and won the victory through our Almighty Lord, then shall we receive the crown of rejoicing, the incorruptible and unfading crown of glory. Then shall we reign with Him, in our proper sphere, in bliss eternal, in that kingdom which

shall have no end. Then shall we, "in the presence of an infinite number of angels, sit in the same throne with Christ; and shall, by the just sentence of God, be praised for conquerors over the world, and the invisible powers of hell! What can the soul desire more than to be partaker of all those divine goods, and even to accompany Christ in the same throne? O how cheerfully do they bear all afflictions for Christ, who, with a lively faith and certain hope, apprehend so sublime honors!"¹

What, now, my brethren, should *we* learn from all this? what should be the lesson which *we* should take home with us, who have the blessed Gospel proclaimed in our ears, whereby we may live and reign with Christ? Can it be needful to say more in order to point out how plain are the requisitions of Holy Writ, how easy to understand what the Gospel demands of every man, and what every man must do, ere the death and atonement of the Redeemer can be of any avail to his eternal salvation? I am persuaded that it is not. You have heard, and you do comprehend, the simple and easily understood truths which lie at the foundation of our holy religion. You know that you are commanded to be regenerate and born anew in the sacrament of baptism: have ye all done this? have ye entered at the door into the ark of Christ's Church, and thus covenanted with Him for your salvation? If ye have done thus much, ye know that this will not avail you if this be all; it is not enough to have been laid in the "bath of regeneration," (of which St. Paul speaks;) there must also be the "renewing of the Holy Ghost;" there must be a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; we must die with Christ; we must suffer for His name and His holy religion, before we can have any well grounded hope of living and reigning with Christ. Do ye not know, and do ye not understand these things? If ye do not, where lies the difficulty? What is there which is not plain enough? But if ye do know and understand (as I verily believe you do), what excuse can too many in this

1) BP. JEREMY TAYLOR's *Works*, Vol. I. p. 377.

congregation give for their coldness and lukewarmness, for their indifference and worldliness? Alas, there is no excuse but what is worthless in the sight of God; and they who profess with their mouth, and assent (it may be) with their minds and understandings to what they do not practise in their lives, shall find it sadly true that the name of Christian will be of no profit to them in the day of account, but only aggravate their condemnation and misery. They shall then see (when it is too late to be of any avail) how paltry is the plea, "we heard the Gospel preached, we had the Bible in our hands, and the means of grace freely offered to us in the Church; we, among the people of God, cried 'Lord, Lord;' but we were too busy; we had too much to attend to; the cares of life were too many and too pressing, to allow us time or inclination to do the will of our Father in heaven; and we hope that we shall not be condemned, when we wished well, and meant at some convenient time or other to do well." My brethren, read over the concluding verses of our Lord's sermon on the mount, as given by St. Matthew, in the seventh chapter of his Gospel, and I am certain that, where the heart is not steeped in sin, nor the conscience seared as with a hot iron, there will the soul be startled at the vanity of such excuses; and the man who is almost persuaded to flee from sin and follow hard after righteousness, will see on what a miry and perishing foundation he is standing.¹ What, then (again let me ask), should

1) O thou, whoever thou art, that art tempted to commit a sin, do thou think on death; and that thought will be an angel to thee! The hope of heaven will raise thy courage above the fiercest threatenings of the world; the fear of hell will rob its persuasions of their enchantments; and the very extremity of thy trial may itself contribute to animate thy exertions by the thought that the greater thy endurance now, the greater will be thy reward hereafter. The wildest temptation must shortly have an end; the fiercest flame must burn out for want of fuel; the most bitter cup, when drunk to the dregs, will trouble thee no more. These things are temporal, and hasten, while I speak, to pass away; but the hope, which is visible to the inward eye of faith, is unfading, eternal, heavenly. Bear up, a little while bear up, in the cause of immortality! If thy trial is intolerable, it will by so much the sooner have an end. Thy heart may break, but thy good angel points to Heaven, and One,

be the lesson which we should take home with us? Is it not this—this, which St. Paul, on the verge of the grave, ready to be offered, declares to be so faithful a saying, viz., “if we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him,” but only on this condition: “if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him,” but in and by no other way? May God of His great mercy teach us all this lesson of heavenly wisdom! and O, that each one in this congregation did realize, that “there can be no greater comfort to Christian people than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles, and sicknesses. For He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain: He entered not into His glory before He was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life, is gladly to die with Christ, that we may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life.”¹

greater than the angels, will, ere long, fulfil His promise, “be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life!”—*BP. HEBER'S Sermons in England*, p. 17.

1) Office for the Visitation of the Sick.

1) Where the body of Christ now is, there is the real “Holy of Holies.” There is the seat of that happiness which is peculiarly prepared and destined for the faithful followers of Christ. There is the abode of angels; there are the spirits of the just made perfect; there is God, the Judge of all. To that place, and to the state and condition of happiness which is enjoyed there, every son of man may arrive, to whom the invitation of divine mercy has been extended. There is our home—here is our pilgrimage. There is our Father—here we are pilgrims and strangers. There is the Son of God, our Brother, and our Friend—here we live among fallen creatures, a cold and selfish world. There is our peace, and repose, and rest—here is vexation, turbulence, and sorrow.—*REV. GEORGE TOWNSEND, Notes on the Gospels*, p. 216.

Whitsunday.

SERMON XX.

THE OFFICE AND AGENCY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

EPHESIANS iv. 30.—“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

It was our blessed privilege, just ten days ago, to meet together in this house of God to celebrate the glorious Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it was then declared from this sacred place, that “the Ascension of Christ is a necessary article of the creed, in respect of those great effects which immediately were to follow it, and did absolutely depend upon it. The blessed Apostles had never preached the Gospel, had they not been endued with power from above; but none of that power had they received, if the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner had not descended: and the Holy Ghost had not come down, except our Saviour had ascended first. For He Himself, when He was to depart from His disciples, grounded the necessity of His departure upon the certainty of this truth, saying, ‘If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart I will send Him unto you’ (John xvi. 7.)”¹ We, by faith, with that company of Apostles and disciples, beheld Him carried up into heaven; and we, by faith, heard those angelic voices of God’s ministering spirits, which said that “this same Jesus which is taken up into heaven shall so come in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven.” If our hopes were high, if our expectations were proportioned to

1) BP. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 402.

the glorious promise which the Saviour left to stay and support His waiting Church, this holy festal day will show us the accomplishment of all that the heart of man can desire ; for now we meet in the temple of God, to praise and magnify the unsearchable riches of Christ, " who as at this time did teach the hearts of His faithful people by sending to them the light of His Holy Spirit ;"¹ now, we assemble ourselves together, not only to rejoice in the holy comfort and the blessed life-giving influences of the Divine Paraclete, but to take heed unto ourselves, lest this Pentecostal feast minister to our condemnation ; lest coming with our sins upon our heads, unrepented of, and our hearts unrenewed and unsanctified, we find, that instead of the Holy Ghost being our Urim and Thummim, our light and perfection, He, " our God, is a consuming fire : " and now we seek, by prayer and meditation, by searching diligently into the Divine Oracles, with humble, teachable spirits, by gladly availing ourselves of the blessed privileges of the Church of God, her divinely appointed ministry and sacraments, her holy worship and her pure doctrines, to grow in grace, to increase in holiness, and to strive by the Holy Ghost " to have a right judgment in all things." Beseeching the aid of " the Lord and Giver of life," in this and every other good word and work, let me direct your attention to the solemn language of St. Paul, " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption ; " and let us seek to draw from it the lessons of instruction and warning.

First ; take note what is here said to be the office and agency of the Holy Ghost ; " whereby, or by whom, ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." It is very possible that under this figurative allusion to the sealing of the Ephesian Christians, may be contained a reference to the extraordinary and miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit, which in the days of the Apostle were not at all uncommon, as well among those commissioned to teach and preach in Christ's name as among private Christians ; and in this sense the Holy Spirit might properly be said to seal them unto

1) Collect for Whitsunday.

the day of redemption: this, however, could by no means be all, or the full import of the language of the text. The influences of the Holy Spirit are much more generally diffused, His aid being absolutely necessary to the salvation of every man. The gift of miracles, which He bestowed on the Apostles and first teachers of the truths of revelation, and which was not withheld from very many others in the Apostolic and succeeding age, has now been lost or taken away. The Church does not now exhibit, neither has exhibited for sixteen hundred years, or more, the "signs" which our Lord said should follow them that believe; "in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."¹ But, while this is so, it is none the less certain, that the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit has ever been shed abroad upon the Church; for our Master Himself has said—and when He hath spoken shall not He make it good?—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He has ever kept His Church alive by the life-giving energy of His Spirit, and though, as in the days of old, His Church has "rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit;"² though she has often grieved Him by her sins and crimes, yet He has not forgotten His gracious promises; and He has ever been present in His sacraments to bless them, and make them efficacious by the Spirit to every true believer. The office of the Spirit, then, according to St. Paul, in the text, is, as it were, to set a seal upon the faithful Christian, by which he should be known, and in the day of final redemption accepted in the Beloved. The Apostle had before, in the first chapter of this Epistle, declared to the Ephesians, that "after that they believed, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, (or rather the promised Holy Spirit), who is the earnest (or pledge) of the inheritance of the saints, until the redemption of the purchased possession, i. e. the Church, which our Lord pur-

1) Mark xvi. 17, 18.

2) Is. lxiii. 10.

chased with His own blood." And the language, though figurative, aptly illustrates the office of the Holy Spirit in His ordinary influences upon the hearts of Christians, whereby they are assured that they are the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life. Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised;"¹ and the descendants of Abraham boasted of this seal as the distinguishing mark of the chosen people. By it, they claimed a right to the promised blessings of the covenant with Abraham, and because of its being set upon them they expected to obtain and enjoy the blessings to which they were called. The Holy Spirit, however, is the seal which Christians have to assure themselves and others that they are God's. The gift of Him is the pledge which they have of their Lord, that He will keep His promises; and the fruits of His operations on their hearts are among the sure tests, which they can always apply, to ascertain their real state and condition in the sight of God. When He graciously works in our hearts; when He opens our eyes, purifies our souls, elevates our desires and affections; when He (in the words of the Article) "mortifies the works of the flesh and our earthly members, and draws up our mind to high and heavenly things;"² He impresses upon us the seal of His Divine and holy character. It is the seal by which the Lord knoweth them that are His; it is the seal which shall not be broken until the day of redemption, until the time when the Lord shall gather together His elect, and we, with our ransomed and glorified bodies, shall bow before the throne, and ever chant the praises of the Triune God who sitteth thereon. To this special office of the Holy Ghost the text alludes; "by whom we are sealed;" by whom is impressed upon us who believe, the mark of whose we are, and whither we are going; by whom, moreover, we are certainly assured of the redemption of our bodies from death and corruption, and of their final glorification in the last day. He only, the "Eternal

1) Rom. iv. 11.

2) Article XVII.

Spirit"¹ alone, can set this seal upon us; He only can be the earnest or pledge of our salvation, which our Saviour Christ wrought out for us: and if we, my brethren, cannot find the evidence of His grace, in our being turned away from the world, and desiring and seeking after heaven, we may well doubt whether He has sealed us unto the day of redemption. If the soul have no relish for spiritual things; if religion, or the service of God be not regarded both as our bounden duty, and as the pleasure and privilege of our adoption into the family of God; if, in short, we do not really desire, and humbly and heartily strive, to live daily a life of consistent holiness and devotion, we may reasonably, and we ought very seriously, to inquire if the Holy Spirit have set His seal upon us; since if He have not, then are we only deceiving ourselves, and are in no way protected from the Destroying Angel, who will in God's own time pass over the earth, and spare only those who are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption.²

Secondly; now if such is the exclusive office of God the Holy Ghost, if through His agency alone we can have any hope or any pledge of our being pardoned and accepted by God the Father, through the merits of God the Son, with

1) Heb. ix. 14.

2) If thou wilt not live heartless for ever, if ever thou meanest to move or walk, or do any thing, you must to that Creator of spirits and lover of souls, and never leave soliciting, till He hath breathed another breath into your nostrils, another soul into your soul; you must lay yourself at His feet, and with all the violence, and rhetoric, and humility, that these wants will prompt thee to; and woo and importune the Holy Spirit to overshadow thee, to conceive all holy graces spiritually in thee; and if thou canst not suddenly receive a gracious answer, that the Holy Ghost will come in unto thee and lodge with thee this night; yet learn so much patience from thy beggarly estate, as not to challenge Him at thy own times, but comfortably to wait His leisure. * * * But above all things be circumspect, watch and observe the Spirit, and be perpetually ready to receive its blasts. Let it never have breathed on thee in vain; let thine ear be for ever open to its whisperings: if it should pass by thee, either not heard, or not understood, it were a loss that all the treasures upon earth could not repair, and for the most part you know it comes not in the thunder. Christ seldom speaks so loud now-a-days as He did to Saul. It is in a soft still voice; and I will not promise you that men that dwell in a mill, that are perpetually engaged in worldly, loud employments, or that men asleep, shall ever come to hear it.—DR. HAMMOND, *Sermon on Gal. vi. 15.*

what force does the warning of the Apostle come home to every Christian heart; and with what faithful prayer and watchfulness ought we to strive, so as, neither in thought, word, or deed, to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God." Here, however, it becomes necessary to inquire in what sense it is true, that we may be said to *grieve* God the Holy Ghost. How can He who is God, and therefore in no wise affected by the feelings which characterize finite, imperfect beings, be moved by sorrow, or grief, or any such painful emotions? I trust, my brethren, that no one here present is so ignorant of the general tenor of Scripture language, as not to know that it is in great measure founded upon human relations, or upon the connection between man and man, and the feelings or motives by which they are actuated. Hence, in order to accommodate itself to our limited capacities, and speak in a way comprehensible to us, it attributes to God feelings of anger and wrath, of pleasure and joy, of grief and vexation, of sorrow and repentance, when at the same time we are expressly taught, that God is "without body, parts, or passions," that He is incapable of change, incapable of being affected or moved by any of those feelings which characterize man, a weak and finite creature. Man, *because* of his weakness and dependence, is subject to continual change, and under the influence of motives which cannot possibly have any effect upon a perfect and almighty Being. God, in consequence of the perfection of His nature, is not susceptible of any of these things;¹ so that, in all those places where God is said to be influenced by feelings or purposes similar to those on which we act or think, we are not for a moment to suppose that it is strictly and literally so, which would be to make God such an one as we are; but that the language is accommodated, or brought

1) The Scriptures speak figuratively when they ascribe wrath to God. The Divine nature is insusceptible of the perturbations of passion; and when it is said that God is angry, it is a figure which conveys this useful warning to mankind, that God will be determined by His wisdom and by His providential care of His creation, to deal with the wicked as a prince in anger deals with rebellious subjects.—BP. HORSLEY'S *Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 194.

down to our understandings, and our modes of expression. Of such character is the text, which says, "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" and which strictly interpreted would imply, that He is susceptible of the emotion of grief, while this would be contrary to His essential character and nature. It can only be in this sense, then, "speaking after the manner of men," that the Holy Spirit can be said to be grieved; "we must therefore (to use the language of Dr. Whitby¹) remove from this expression all turbulent motions, all real pain, disquiet, discontent; and look upon it as intimating, first, that we act towards Him in such a manner as creates grief in our fellow-creatures when we act so to them; as when we refuse to hearken to His counsels, rebel against His government, and do that which is opposite to His holy nature: and secondly, that He in consequence acts so towards us, as men are wont to do when they are grieved by us, and displeased at us; withdrawing their former kindness, forsaking our company, and abandoning us to our enemies." I have thought it meet, my brethren, to speak thus explicitly upon this point, because it is sometimes a matter of perplexity to the weak, and timid, and ill informed, and is sometimes made use of by the infidel, to harass and disturb the pious but unlearned Christian, and even to undermine his faith in the Gospel. If, however, the principle of explanation be kept in mind, the solution of all difficulties arising out of this kind of language, is easy, clear, and consistent: and the more diligently we read the Word of God, the more heartily shall we be disposed to appreciate, and be thankful for, the mercy and condescension of God in this respect.

Now, in what way are we to act, what course are we to pursue, in order that we may not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and thus ruin our souls? I will tell you, my brethren, as plainly and as directly as I can;—we must begin, as the first step, with *forsaking and hating sin*, because every species of sin, every transgression of the law of God, whether in thought, word, or act, tends to grieve the Holy Spirit.

1) AP. D'OYLY & MANT, *Comment.* in loc.

Every thing sinful is repugnant to His nature, and He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with the slightest favor or toleration. So long as men continue in known sin, in the love or practice of any thing contrary to the revealed will of God, or in the dislike or disrelish for spiritual things, they are grieving the Holy Spirit: men must forsake sin, must flee from it, must hate it, as the defilement and stain upon their soul, if they are truly desirous to please God. He can never look upon them with favor, He will never bestow heaven upon them, unless they try to avoid, day by day, the sins and wickedness which are so hateful in His sight. As every man knows, or ought to know, the plague of his own heart, he can easily tell of what sins he is guilty, and what sins consequently he ought to forsake. Is he given to indulgence in pride, vanity, or ambition? Let him learn the lesson of humility, lowliness, and a due estimate of the things of time and sense; "learn of me," says our blessed Redeemer; "for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."¹ Is a man intemperate, either in eating or drinking, or in any of the pleasures and pursuits of this life? Let him learn to be sober in all things, using this world as not abusing it; and let him remember that for all these things God will bring him into judgment. Is any one accustomed to make engagements and not fulfil them, to make promises and not keep them, or, like the man in the Gospel, to say, "I go," and yet break his word? Let him put away from him all such lying and deceit; it is not they who *say*, but they who *do*, to whom eternal life is promised; yea, and the man who has little or no sense of moral obligation, is in a most lamentably dangerous state, and may, by and by, like Ananias and Sapphira, lie unto the Holy Ghost, and bring upon himself the terrible judgments of God. Is any one so immersed in the world, so devoted to the mere animal life, as to have become dull and cold, and stupid, with regard to every thing else? does he listen to what is said about another life, another existence of either happiness or misery for ever, as a man half asleep, or as one hears something which he neither knows nor cares any thing about? then

1) Matt. xi. 29.

let him awake ; let him hear the still small voice now, before it speaks to him in the dreadful thunders of the judgment day.¹ Let him flee from sin, as just Lot did from Sodom and the corrupt and abominable cities of the plain ; let him flee for his life, not looking behind him ; for even as God rained down fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them, so shall he punish the wicked, disobedient, earthly and sensual, who have despised both His calls and His threatenings. O how continually and how sorely is the Holy Spirit grieved by the wickedness of men, whom He is calling to repentance, with whom He is pleading, and to whom He is pointing out the strait and narrow path of holiness, and urging to forsake the broad road to destruction ! Not a day, nay, not an hour passes, in which we do not need His help ; not a day nor an hour in which He does not afford it ; and yet

1) There are those, even now—and God grant that their number may not be greater than many of us imagine—there are those even now whom preaching cannot move, whom counsel cannot amend, whom example and experience have no power to alter, who are beyond the reach of other men's prayers, and whose hearts refuse, even in their hours of greatest terror, to utter a prayer for themselves. Some of these have outlived the pleasures of life, yet perish in its sins, simply because they cannot forsake them ; they are not altogether insensible to their danger, but they cannot stop, though hell gapes wide before them ; like an ox to the slaughter they pass on, or a beast to the snare, the heartless, hopeless, joyless slaves of sin, and the heirs of torments unspeakable ! And these men had once, like those Jews, (Luke ix. 42,) their day of visitation ; these men had once the power given them, if they had seized on and improved it to the best advantage, of becoming through Christ the children of God, and with Him the heirs of everlasting glory ! What might they then have been ? What are they now ? What must they soon become ? O ye who yet feel the comfortable whispers of God's Spirit in your souls, whose consciences yet warn you when you fall into sin, and to whom the power is yet allowed, when you have the inclination to apply your souls to prayer and the study of the Scriptures, deal not, I beseech you, with the Holy Ghost, as Felix dealt with St. Paul, saying, "Go thy ways now ; when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee." The Spirit of God will not always strive with men ; He will not come exactly when we call Him, when we have often already sent Him away ; and if ye neglect the opportunities of effectual salvation which are now presented, the time may soon come in which "ye shall desire to see one of these days of the Son of Man and shall not see it." Improve then, to the utmost of your ability, the grace already vouchsafed to you ; it is not your own ; it may be withdrawn at any time ; and it will be taken away from that unprofitable servant who hides in a napkin the bounty of His heavenly Master.—Br. HEBER'S *Sermons in England*, p. 177.

how few are the days or hours in which we do not grieve Him, insult Him, and cause Him to withdraw the light and life of His presence, by our sins open and secret, which we are so wedded to that we cannot bear to forsake them. If there be one before me who hears these words, and doubts in his heart whether or no they apply to him, let me beseech him to think and to pray ; to think what he is doing, what he is leaving undone, and to pray to this same Holy Spirit to pardon his grievous offences, and help him to go and sin no more.

It is not, however, the whole of his duty to forsake sin ; there is something more than this—he must not stop here—he must go on—he must press forward—it is his duty to *strive after holiness of heart and life* ; if he do not this, he will bring ruin and shame on himself. Many a man has given up his evil practices in great part, forsaken and broken away from most of his vicious habits, and begun to pay considerable attention to the demands of the Gospel of Christ ; he has swept and garnished his house, and thought it meet for the Divine indwelling ; but having stopped here, he has taken unto himself other habits, practices and sentiments ; and what has been the result ? the last state of that man is worse than the first ; worse, because it is vastly more hard to renew him again to repentance, when he has so sorely grieved the Holy Spirit, than to induce him to listen to the first pleadings of His gracious voice. There is no one who is safe in stopping any where, or ever thinking that he has made such advances in the Christian life that he may rest securely ; not so ; he and all must press onward ; he and all must forget the things behind, and reach forth unto those before, if they would hope to gain the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus. O let us remember, then, that every sin which we commit, every sin which we do not forsake, and every advance in holiness which we neglect to make, causes us to grieve that Holy Spirit, which our Saviour purchased for so great and precious a price as the shedding of His own blood on the cross. He will not set upon us the seal of “holiness to the Lord,” unless we seek His gracious

influences ; and whither shall we go, where shall we hide ourselves, if His mark be not upon us ? He will not, He cannot, consistently with His truth, seal us unto the day of redemption, if we resist or despise His influences, if we give no heed to His monitions, now while the day of grace is ours. Soon, soon the day will be past and the night come ; the night of death will ere long close upon us all, and then there will be no room left for repentance ; if our souls be not then washed in the blood of the Lamb, if our bodies be not sealed unto the day of their redemption from the power of the grave, by the Holy Spirit of God, O what tongue can tell, what pen can record the unspeakable and irretrievable agony which we shall suffer for ever and ever ! If it seem horrible even to *think* of ; if to our dull and imperfect comprehension it seems dreadful, what must the *reality* be—what *will* it be to each one of us ? God grant unto us to strive, in the might of the Spirit that we grieve Him not, that we do not by our sins provoke Him to take away from us His favor and guidance, His restraining and directing hand ; for if He do this, we are dead ; we shall continue dead in trespasses and sins, and at the last we shall die a never-ending death.



Whitsunday.

SERMON XXI.

THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE GRACE.

1 COR. ii. 14.—“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.”

THE Christian religion is emphatically a “reasonable service.” It asks nothing of man which is not consistent with the soundest and clearest reason; it requires him to believe nothing which is not either accordant with reason, or else far transcending its grasp; and it obliges him to do nothing which does not commend itself to good sense and enlightened judgment. These broad and unqualified assertions, though perhaps not needful to confirm the faith of professing Christians, yet are in a measure demanded in self-defence. Infidelity claims the attention of men, and boasts of its superiority, mainly on the ground of reason; and affects to undervalue and despise the religion of the cross, as the offspring of priestcraft and deception, and as abounding in absurdities and contradictions. The unreflecting and the ignorant are very apt to be imposed upon by the pretensions of those who talk much and loudly about reason and common sense; and, doubtless, as they listen to the vapid declamations and fierce tirades of some malicious skeptic or doubter, they suppose that at last he has accomplished the overthrow, and for ever prostrated the hated religion of the Gospel; a task, by the way, which was found too great for the blasphemous sarcasms and gross perversions of Voltaire, and his

aiders and abettors ; the glowing sophistries and impurities of Rousseau ; the cowardly and base attacks of Gibbon ; the specious but false logic of Hume :—yea, a task far too great for the combined malice, wit, or learning of all the infidel writers and declaimers in any and every age whatsoever. Forgetting, or being ignorant of these significant facts, many are caught in the snares of infidelity, who have the opportunity of knowing better. Many, I doubt not, are persuaded that Christianity is only a cunningly-devised fable, hardly worthy a moment's consideration, and teaches things both unreasonable and absurd. At the same time, I am perfectly certain, that none of these have made a fair trial of that religion which they affect to despise ; none of them have duly weighed what Christianity really proposes to do ; and especially, by what means and by what strength it professes to be able to accomplish the renovation of mankind. It is no valid objection to the Gospel scheme to say that it does not suit the fancies, or habits, or preconceived notions of every individual man ; for this it was never intended to do. Neither will the sensible and reflecting man deem it any wise prejudicial to the Gospel, as coming from God, to see (as, alas, every one must see) that there is very considerable misunderstanding and contradiction, on important points, even among the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus ; because he knows (by examination of the Scriptures) that there is no infallible safeguard, which shall in all cases prevent error and perversion ; and that men, after being supplied with the means of arriving at truth, are left to the employment of these means, which, if used properly, and with an humble and docile spirit, will serve to guide them into all needful truth ; but if little used or not used at all, will only help to confirm them in doubt, and ignorance, and unbelief. The fact is, that the Christian religion appeals to the reason and the judgment of men. It offers life on the one hand and death on the other.¹ It declares unto us God and

1) The gospel is a system which agrees most fully with the soundest principles of reason, resting not on fancy, nor on feeling, but on the basis of eternal truth. Men are not required to enter blindfold, and grope their passage with

His holiness, and contrasts with these the hard bondage of sin and Satan, calling upon us, in language which cannot be mistaken, choose ye this day whom ye will serve. It delineates in few, but expressive words, the deep degradation of our race, when left to themselves; their helplessness, blindness, misery, and wickedness; and then glowingly, and with pathos unequalled, describes the enlightening efficacy, and the purifying and elevating power of the truth as it is in Jesus; inviting and urging them to search and see for themselves, and to choose that good part which shall never be taken away.¹ There is, therefore, no solid ground of objection, on the score of reason, against Christianity; and the infidel cavils and pretended difficulties are found to be utterly worthless, when brought to the test, and weighed in the balance of enlightened and sound judgment.

But, it will be asked, and with great propriety, are these remarks intended to elevate reason by depressing revela-

uncertain and faltering steps, along the narrow path of salvation. They are to be addressed as intelligent beings; weakened and corrupted it is true, but still capable, under the gracious dispensation of Christ, of appreciating the claims, testing the evidences, and judging of the adaptation of the Gospel. The sinner is not to be drawn by illusion, any more than by force, into the way of life. The appeal is to his mind and to his heart. Who that reads the discourses of Christ and His Apostles, can fail to perceive that they are characterized by a bold and manly sense, far removed from rhapsodies of enthusiasm on one side, and from the incoherences of ignorance on the other, so plain as to be comprehended by the lowest, so dignified as to be worthy the attention of the most refined and learned.—BR. DELANCEY, *Address at Commencement of Gen. Theo. Seminary*, 1841.

1) While at war with human propensities and predilections, it is the peculiarity of our faith to pass beyond inclinations of every kind to the deepest coverts of the heart. The soul has ever had its wants, its deep spiritual wants; and though by nature, or what appears to be nature, they are but indistinctly apprehended, yet this uneasiness and unhappiness are real. Christianity, however, shed forth its light that these might be accurately known; and then it met and satisfied them all. It met the humble desire to know the truth, relating to salvation, to life, to immortality,—it met the compunction of conscience,—it met the entire feeling of moral infirmity: all these the Gospel met, and led them to the cross of the Saviour. There it opened treasures of divine instruction,—there it gave a hallowed assurance of pardon,—there it poured in a stream of heavenly consolation. The soul enjoys itself only when it effectually apprehends the light and the peace of the Gospel.—BR. H. U. ONDERDONK, *Address at Commencement of Gen. Theol. Seminary*, 1838.

tion? Is it meant to assert man's natural capability to discover the truth, and to turn himself from the ways of sin and corruption unto the holiness and constant devotion of soul, body, and spirit, to the Lord and Saviour? or is it meant that by nature mankind are endued with such clear and sound judgment, and with such strength as that they can of themselves do whatsoever they desire, or are persuaded is right and just, and conducive to real happiness here and hereafter? O no, God forbid! I repudiate and abhor all such and similar unchristian and pernicious sentiments; they are alike dishonorable to God, and false as respects man; and "in all which hitherto hath been spoken, touching the force and use of man's reason in things divine, I must crave that I be not so understood or construed, as if any such thing, by virtue thereof, could be done without the aid and assistance of God's most blessed Spirit."¹ While I seek, then, to vindicate the Gospel against the arrogant assumptions of the infidel, who claims to be possessed of more reason and common sense than any body else, let me sedulously guard against even the appearance of exalting man's ability to do aught that is holy in the sight of God, without God's assistance. For this purpose, the language of St. Paul in the text seems peculiarly appropriate. "The natural man (he says) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned:" that is to say, man as he is born into this world, is so depraved and turned out of the right way, as that the holy requirements of the Gospel are mere foolishness unto him. He neither receives what it declares, nor does what it enjoins; nay, so far from being able to ascertain by his own unaided powers what he ought to believe and to do, he cannot, now that he has the Word of revealed truth in his hands, and is permitted to search it continually, and has also the ministry of Christ's Church guiding and directing him in spiritual things, he cannot even now know aright the things of the Spirit of God; he cannot,

1) HOOKER'S *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. III. ch. viii. § 18.

even under these most favorable circumstances, repent, believe, and obey, as he ought to do, and as he must do would he gain heaven, except he look *beyond* himself for light and strength, and except he realize that all these things, the truth, the holiness, the atoning efficacy of Christ's blood, are "*spiritually* discerned."

You will observe, I trust, my brethren, the unqualified manner in which the Apostle maintains the necessity of Divine grace, in order to comprehend both what our natural condition is, and how the Gospel is intended to meet the wants of that condition. According to his inspired teaching, there is nothing surprising in the reception which the Gospel meets with at the hands of the majority of our race. It is not because the religion of the cross is unreasonable in itself, or in its requirements; it is not because there is not evidence sufficient to convince any sensible person, that the Gospel in the Church contains the things necessary to salvation; it is not because of these things that most of men in Christian lands fail to receive, in its fulness and saving efficacy, the truth as it is in Jesus. On the contrary, as we see, it is very common for men to call or consider themselves Christians, and to profess a sort of general, though exceedingly vague and indefinite, belief in the Word of God; and very frequently many go much farther than this, by paying a very proper and becoming respect to many of the duties and services of religion, thereby acknowledging, and to all appearance fully consenting unto, the reasonableness and the truth of Christianity; and yet we cannot but see that a large proportion in every professedly Christian community, do not receive the things of the Spirit of God fully and heartily, as they ought to do if they expect any real benefit from them. Look where we will, and the conviction is forced upon us, that men naturally have no love for the pure, holy, and self-denying principles of the Gospel. Nay, we know that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and leads to death and misery; so that the natural man, unrenewed and unsanctified, is full of prejudice, selfishness, ignorance, and blindness. This world and its concerns are what he loves,

and all that he cares about; and if he can gain these, he will peril his immortal soul without scruple or hesitation. To him it seems the veriest folly and fanaticism, to trouble one's self about religion and its uncompromising demands. To him the preaching of the cross is indeed foolishness. The rejection of the world, repentance, faith, the atonement by Christ's blood, the transforming power and grace of the Holy Ghost, the humility, the self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit of the Gospel, have no meaning to him, but are rather idle tales, fit only for the weak or superstitious. There is, hence, nothing to be surprised at in the non-reception of the things of the Spirit of God by all such; nay, it could not be otherwise; for not only are they foolishness to every man in his natural, carnal state, but (continues the Apostle) he cannot know them, as long as he remains in this state; he cannot understand aright the things which make for his everlasting peace, except some change take place in him, because these things are spiritually discerned.

Now, my brethren, such being the case with mankind in their natural state, you will at once perceive that they have not the power of themselves to turn from sin, and to follow hard after righteousness; and you will, I trust, perceive another equally important truth, viz. that all light and strength, both to see, know, and do the will of God, come directly and solely from the Holy Ghost.¹ Proud and conceited man may disbelieve, and even deride truths so humiliating as these; the worldly-minded, and the lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God, may smile, perhaps sneer, at the earnestness with which such self-mortifying truths are urged upon them, and may be willing to brave the awful

1) Let no man mistake my meaning! I do not say the time can be found in which the sinner, by his own natural strength and unassisted faculties, can either obtain or follow after salvation. I know that by nature we are incapable of any good thing; that the old man is, in his very constitution, in continual enmity against God; and that either to will, or to do what God requires, altogether surpasses our powers, unless both the preventing and assisting grace of God's Spirit descend on the soul both to give us, in the first instance, "a good will," and to "work with" and support our endeavors after salvation, when we have that will.—*BR. HEBER'S Sermons in England*, p. 175.

dangers to which they are exposed, while they despise the riches of God's grace ; and the man who is a Christian only in name, may doubt, and in his heart and life deny, that his condition, when left to himself, is so deplorable and so helpless ;—but, notwithstanding the open or secret unbelief of men, still the truth of God stands sure. His Spirit must open the eyes of men's understandings and hearts, or they cannot see. His Spirit must give them a realizing sense of the enormity of sin and corruption. His Spirit must show them the way out of the mazes of error and wickedness. His Spirit must teach them to enter in at the strait gate, and to walk in the narrow way that leadeth unto life. His Spirit must pour into their hearts the love and fear of God, the humility, patience, resignation, unwavering trust, and all other graces and excellences of the Christian life. I say, my brethren, the Holy Spirit alone can teach us the true and living way, and give us that strength by which alone we can do works pleasing unto God. Therefore, let no man be deceived, or deceive himself to his own destruction. The light of conscience is insufficient to guide him into the pathway of life ; serving only to make more evident the great and thick darkness which surrounds him ; so that the Sun of Righteousness must shine into his heart, and quicken it into light and life. Would he be a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus, and have the hope and comfort of a Christian ? Then he must pray continually for the grace and strength of the Holy Ghost. He must ask Him to

“ Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate.”

He must be much in prayer and supplication ; often on his bended knees in private, in family devotion, and in the public worship of the Church, knowing that it is only by this one Spirit that we have access to the Father. He must be careful to avoid running into the pernicious error, that because he has no strength of himself, therefore he may sit down in sloth and inactivity, waiting for God to do every thing, and

to force him to be saved, without any exertion on his part; and the only way in which he can escape so miserable a delusion, is to strive, day by day, to do whatsoever God, in His Word and by His Church, requires him to do. Faithfully and zealously must he use the means of grace, especially that holy sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, which so many are guilty of turning away from and practically despising. Honestly and heartily must he seek for grace and strength in the daily discharge of his duty,¹ endeavoring to cultivate all holy affections, to root out all evil passions and desires, to wean his heart from worldliness and vanity, to be filled with a deep and abiding sense of the perishable and transitory nature of earthly things, and of the near and sure approach of death and eternal judgment; and, in fine, to live as a dying man ought to live, in patient hope, and in constant readiness to put off this earthly tabernacle, and to be clothed upon with the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Let me beseech you, then, to search into this matter, feeling assured of its unutterable moment. You cannot, I would fain hope, be deluded by the pretensions and boasts of infidelity; for they are mere pretensions and vain boastings, being contradictory to the experience of mankind, and leading to results of the most melancholy description. You cannot, I am persuaded, be drawn into the adoption of that cold and cheerless system, which takes from man every prospect of happiness which the Gospel holds out, and, thrusting away every support, every comfort, every guidance from on high, leaves him to grope in blindness and ignorance, puffs him up with pitiable conceit of his own greatness and dignity, and abandons him to the conflict with a host of enemies, and with naught but his feeble arm to withstand them.²

1) "Ay me, how many perils doe unfold
The righteous man, to make him daily fall,
Were not that heavenly grace doth him uphold,
And steadfast Truth acquite him out of all!"

SPENSER'S *Faerie Queen*.

2) Perhaps our modern skeptics are ignorant, that without the belief of a God, and the hope of immortality, the miseries of human life would often be

But I do not, I confess, fear much the progress among you, my brethren, of open and avowed infidelity. It is too revolting, and too daringly impious, for the majority of sensible and reflecting men. And yet there is, alas, too much room for apprehension from a spirit even more deadly than the one just noticed ; because, under the mask of friendship and respect, it does infinitely more harm than the fiercest assaults of the open enemy of the Gospel. I mean the wide spread

insupportable. But can I suppose them in a state of total stupidity, utter strangers to the human heart and to human affairs ! Sure they would not thank me for such a supposition. Yet this I must suppose, or I must believe them to be most perfidious and cruel men. Caressed by those who call themselves the great, engrossed by the formalities and fopperies of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, they perhaps have little need and little relish for the consolations of religion. But let them know, that in the solitary scenes of life, there is many an honest and tender heart, pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor ; whom nothing but trust in Providence and the hope of a future retribution, could preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they, with sacrilegious hands, attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny ! Did it ever happen that the influence of their tenets disturbed the tranquillity of virtuous retirement, deepened the gloom of human distress, or aggravated the horrors of the grave ? Is it possible that this may have happened in many instances ? Is it probable that this hath happened, or may happen, in one single instance ?—Ye traitors to human kind, how can ye answer for it to your own hearts ? Surely every spark of your generosity is extinguished for ever, if this consideration do not awaken in you the keenest remorse and make you wish in bitterness of soul—But I remonstrate in vain. Could I enforce the present topic by an appeal to your vanity, I might perhaps make some impression ; but to plead with you on the principles of benevolence or generosity, is to address you in a language ye do not or will not understand. But let not the lovers of truth be discouraged. Atheism cannot be of long continuance, nor is there any danger of its becoming universal. The influence of some conspicuous characters has brought it too much into fashion ; which, in a thoughtless and profligate age, it is no difficult matter to accomplish. But when men have retrieved the powers of serious reflection, they will find it a frightful phantom ; and the mind will return gladly and eagerly to its old endearments. One thing we certainly know ; the fashion of sceptical systems soon passeth away. Those unnatural productions, the vile effusion of a hard heart, that mistakes its own restlessness for the activity of genius, and its own captiousness for sagacity of understanding, may, like other monsters, please awhile by their singularity, but the charm is soon over ; and the succeeding age will be astonished to hear that their forefathers were deluded or amused with such fooleries.—DR. BEATTIE, *Essay on Truth*, Part III. ch. 3, p. 249.

practical unbelief which prevails so generally in every nominally Christian community. This is the more dangerous, because more deceitful than open hostility. This leads many to be content with just the outside, the mere surface of religion, deluding them with the baseless hope of safety, while they are dishonoring and despising God's holy law and commandments. This leads them to seek to compound the service of the world and the flesh with the exclusive requirements of the blessed Gospel: and this tends to make them content with their really blind and ignorant condition, and to be in no wise affected by the undoubted necessity of a new heart and a new life ere they can be saved. Let me entreat you to beware that such be not your case; for it is a horrible state of things when men deceive themselves to their own destruction, and wilfully trifle on the edge of a precipice. It is horrible to think how many shall find, when it is too late, that they have trusted in vanity and lies; and that though they have called Lord, Lord, He shall say to them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. Suffer me to persuade you to be properly sensible of your own weakness and inefficiency, and to seek diligently for the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit; to seek for this grace without a moment's delay, knowing that God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;"¹ and to seek for it heartily and honestly; that so you may discern the things of the Spirit, and may be able to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulness of God."²

1) Gen. vi. 3.

2) Eph. iii. 18, 19.

Trinity Sunday.

SERMON XXII.

CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS AND UNITARIAN HERETICS.

DEUT. vi. 4.—“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”

THIS inspired declaration of Moses, being made to the assembled multitude of the children of Israel, only a short time before he was taken away from them, when considered in connection with the circumstances under which, and the people to whom it was addressed, becomes exceedingly important in its bearing on the primary and fundamental doctrine of all true religion, viz. the essential unity of God. It cannot be doubted that the words are express to this point, and in harmony with the constant testimony of Scripture, which asseverates in the strongest terms, that “the Lord our God is one Lord;” one in opposition to the many false gods of some of the heathen; one in direct contradiction to the two eternal principles, good and evil, or the eternity of matter, of others; and one in and of Himself alone. Thus the language of Moses, the man of God, would lead us naturally and properly to the consideration of the unity or oneness of God, in opposition to the false systems and speculations of the heathen, who were ever searching after, but never able to arrive at, a clear knowledge of this truth; but inasmuch as that there is one God, and but one God, is a truth professedly held by all who call themselves Christians, there is the less need to enter at large upon the proofs of it, drawn from reason and revelation. As no one, who believes in Holy

Scripture, pretends to call in question a truth implanted in us in our earliest infancy ; and as it is acknowledged by many, whose only claim to religious belief of any sort consists in yielding a bare assent to this doctrine as most probable ; it would be of no special advantage to lay before you the various and conclusive arguments, whereby we are made sure "that there is none other God but one," as St. Paul declares.¹ I shall, therefore, take the unity of God for granted, in what is intended to be said on a subject very closely connected with it, and affecting the foundation of our most holy faith.

It is not unknown to you, my brethren, that amid the multiplicity of sects which have arisen within the last three hundred years, there is one which, claiming the name of Christian, has assumed to itself the title of "Unitarian," implying that they alone are the worshippers of the one true God. The right of this sect to adopt whatever name they choose, is not, of course, denied ; saving that, if in allowing the name, we are expected also in any wise to allow the truth of what is assumed by the name, we must at once, and with indignation, deny them any right to the appellation. Just in the same way, the name of "Catholic," applied to and claimed by the Romanists, or that of "Baptists," applied to and claimed by those who oppose infant baptism, can never be allowed in their sense, unless we give up our own principles, and regard them as in the right and ourselves in the wrong. If, then, the title "Unitarian" be used, when speaking of the followers of Priestly and Belsham, or of Channing and Dewey, it will only be for the sake of brevity and convenience. You are aware, that these men deny the doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead. They contend stoutly against the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; and as might be expected, they make void most of the essential doctrines of Scripture depending on this one ; such as the incarnation, the atonement, the forgiveness of sins through the Saviour's merits and intercession, the purchase and the gift of the Holy Ghost,

1) 1 Cor. viii. 4.

and so on. They assert, that there is but one person in the Godhead, viz. God the Father; the Holy Spirit is made by them to be nothing at all; and the adorable Redeemer is degraded into a mere man. Thus it will be seen that their conceptions of God, as He has revealed Himself in His Word, are essentially and irreconcilably at variance with ours, and with the faith of the Church in all ages. If they be right, we are wrong; if the Catholic faith be true, theirs is a belief without foundation;¹ because there is no such Being as they suppose God to be. This, being borne distinctly in mind, the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity must at once appear.

Now, let me here observe, that it is not my intention, at this time, to prove the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, or to set forth the unsoundness and emptiness of the Unitarian tenets. I desire rather to lay before you exactly how the case stands between us, and to show to what a lamentable and fearful condition one or the other of us is inevitably reduced. Suppose, then, that the Unitarians are right, and that they worship the one true God as He is, and as He has made Himself known to us in Holy Scripture—and what is the condition of us, and of all who hold the doctrine of the Trinity? are we in any other case than that of idolaters? Nay, we are vastly worse off than they who worship gods many and lords many, for they know no better; whereas, we have been taught, and we believe most firmly that “the Lord our God is one Lord.” On the Unitarian supposition, we have exalted a mere man to an equality with God; we have

1) The whole of the Christian religion, the whole body of our faith, by which alone we can be saved, is virtually, or by necessary consequence, comprehended in the form prescribed for baptism, or the ratification of the covenant; or he who believes in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must believe in what each hath done, said, or suffered for his salvation; there is no difference between knowing God, as He is revealed to us in His Word, and knowing His revealed religion; and, therefore, as Christianity is the only true religion, *the doctrine of the Trinity*, as here laid down from Scripture, *must be the only true Christianity*; or else we covenant in baptism for something different from Christianity, or only for a part of it: and covenant by our faith and on our vows, for the pardon of all our sins, and for eternal life, with some one else than God.—REV. PHILIP SKELTON'S *Works*, Vol. III. p. 39.

also created to ourselves a Being whom we denominate the Holy Spirit, and have exalted Him too to the same equality with God ; and we pay worship and service to these equally with God. What are we, then, but gross idolaters ? in what more miserable condition could we be, than that in which we worship a man like ourselves, and expect aid from a creature of our own fancy ? what more wretched, and what more to be dreaded, than the great dishonor and insult which is done to God, who declares that He will not suffer His glory to be given to another ? What more pitiable, than to see enlightened Christian men, who have the Scriptures in their hands, which they are permitted to search daily, so horribly deluded as we are, if Unitarianism be true ? Yea, what can be so deeply affecting, or fill the mind with so many sad emotions, as to see the whole Christian world, the myriads of disciples, martyrs, and holy men, in all ages, given up to the perpetration of such fearful wickedness as to worship a creature instead of the high and holy Creator ? What can bow us down to the dust so completely, as to think that the Church of God, wherever known or heard of, was for fifteen hundred years enveloped in the darkness of pagan idolatry and corruption ; was adding sin to sin, insult to insult, dishonor to dishonor to the Eternal Lord God ; and was, during all this long period, preparing for itself wrath against the day of wrath ? And how deep is the humiliating sense of the blindness and folly of man, regenerated and renovated man, when it is seen and felt, that constant prayer and study of the Scriptures, and the practice of every Christian duty, combined with the faithful use of the divinely appointed means of grace, were not enough to enable our brethren in the Church before us to know and read aright what God Almighty has been pleased to reveal of Himself ; but that it was reserved for a few, a mere handful, compared with the millions who worship and adore the Eternal Trinity, to discover, in these latter days, that the doctrine of the “ Trinity is irrational,” forms “ no part of the Christian religion,”¹ and is a wicked and

1) CHANNING'S *Discourses*, p. 143, &c.

absurd fable ! Alas, how fearful our guilt, and how dread our punishment, if we persist in our wicked and heathenish course ; and how thankful ought all Christian and serious men to be, that the Lord our God has at last discovered Himself to be "one Lord ;" and has sent His Unitarian children to preach this doctrine, and convert the nations, by showing that the blessed Saviour is a created, finite being, differing little if at all from any other man ; and that the Holy Spirit has no existence, except in the darkened imaginations of those who can bring themselves to believe in and worship the ever adorable Trinity ! In such a condition are we placed, if the Unitarian tenets be true ; the most fearful, the most degraded, the most pitiable that can be conceived : and it is impossible for the heart of man to imagine the extent, and the terrible aggravation of our guilt, when we know that it is all done with our eyes open, the Word of God in our hands, and the Catholic faith for our guide !

But let it be supposed, on the other hand, that the doctrine of the Trinity is not only the doctrine of the Church, but also that of Holy Scripture ; and what does the Unitarian worship ? what is his condition ? We believe the doctrine of the text, the unity of God, as firmly and as wholly as any can ; but we believe, moreover, the doctrine which the Scriptures, as a whole, teach, i. e. the doctrine of the Trinity in the Unity. We believe that the Lord our God is one Lord ; "not one only person, but three persons in one substance ; for that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality."¹ We believe, as our Article expresses it, that "there is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions ; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness ; the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead (we believe that) there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity ; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."² Now, on the supposition that all this is

1) Communion Service, " *Proper Preface upon the Feast of Trinity.*

2) Article I.

the truth of Holy Scripture, what, I ask again, does the Unitarian worship? certainly not God, as He has revealed Himself in His Word; not God as He is; but only a fictitious being whom he calls God; a being which has no existence, because the Eternal Father was never without the Eternal Son, and the Eternal Spirit. The Unitarian declares and thinks that he worships God the Father, and Him alone; but this he does not do, because there is no God the Father, except the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ His only-begotten Son; from which Father and Son proceedeth the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life. Therefore, the Unitarian's object of worship is not the Lord God; and he is guilty of idolatry in worshipping a creature, thinking that to be God which has no existence, save in his own distorted fancy.² If the doctrine of the Trinity be true, the Unitarian god is no god, and so, of course, he is guilty of worshipping and serving a creature instead of the Creator. He erects his temples, gathers his assembly of hearers and followers, preaches to them a doctrine of man's invention, tells them to look upon the blessed Saviour, it may be as in some sense more than man, yet in effect as merely setting a good example, urges them to exert themselves, reform their habits, thoughts, and principles, and become good and meritorious

1) 2 Cor. xi. 31.

2) To bring this matter home to the Arians: it is to be observed, that *every article of the Christian faith depends upon the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity*. If that be given up, the other doctrines of our religion must go with it; and so it has been in fact, that the authors who have written against the Trinity, have also disputed away some other essential parts of Christianity; particularly the doctrines of the Satisfaction and of Original sin. The whole Bible treats of little else but our *creation, redemption, sanctification, resurrection, and glorification*, by the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit; and the reader will find that there is neither name, act, nor attribute of the Godhead, that is not shared in common by all the Persons of the Trinity. If, therefore, the Persons of Christ and the Spirit are not God in the Unity of the Father, then the prayers and praises we offer to them, as the Authors of every blessing, will not be directed to the Supreme Lord and God, beside whom no other is to be *worshipped*, but to His creatures and instruments; which overthrows the sense of our whole religion, and drives us upon a sort of second-rate faith and worship, which, beside the blasphemy of it, can be nothing but contradiction.—REV. WM. JONES of Nayland, “*Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity*,” p. xv.

in the sight of God, and teaches them that if need be they are to look with perfect confidence in their own sufficiency to this divinity of man's creation. Is not this a horrible and soul-destroying delusion? Is it not a most lamentable and dreadful condition? But evil and much to be dreaded as this idolatry is, it is not all:—the Unitarian is not simply an *idolater*; he is also a *blasphemer*. He does not only worship and serve that which is no God, but he dishonors, insults, and despises the true and only Lord God. He has brought in a “damnable heresy,”¹ which denies the Lord who bought him and all mankind with His own precious blood; he has “trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing;”² he has “crucified to himself the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame;”³ “God manifest in the flesh,” “the Lord of glory,” He, “who is over all, God blessed for ever,” “the King of kings, and Lord of lords,”⁴ the Creator and Preserver of the world, “the very and eternal God,”⁵ He is degraded by the Unitarian into a mere mortal, dating His existence from the time that “He became flesh;” and though setting a good, nay, perfect example, yet nothing more; He is robbed of His glory, and the honor and worship due to Him are withheld: thus, His holy Name is blasphemed; and thus the creature has the daring presumption to raise his voice against the Almighty Creator! And yet more:—He, into whose name we are baptized, the Holy Ghost the Comforter, that “one Spirit by whom we have access unto the Father,”⁶ He, who inspired the Prophets and Apostles, and blasphemy against whom is unpardonable;⁷ He, too, is dishonored and denied. His sanctifying and illuminating influences are thrust away; the “renewing of the Holy Ghost”⁸ is esteemed a vain thing; “the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us,”⁹ and the “Spirit itself bear-

1) 2 Pet. ii. 1.

2) Heb. x. 29.

3) Heb. vi. 6.

4) 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 8; Rom. ix. 5; Rev. xix. 6. 5) Jno. i. 3, 10; Col. i. 16, 17; Heb. i. 2, 3, etc.

6) Eph. ii. 18.

7) Matt. xii. 31, 32.

8) Tit. iii. 5.

9) Rom. v. 5.

ing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,"¹ are counted idle and unmeaning things; yea, proud, self-righteous, full of vain self-conceit, the Unitarian does great "despite unto the Spirit of grace."² He insults this only Comforter; he tramples upon His love; and neither asks nor desires any of His help. And having in his madness and folly denied his Divine Saviour, he now also denies the Divine Spirit. Could any condition be more deplorable and more fearful than this? Who can believe that the Lord our God will not visit for these things? who can believe that He will suffer very long His holy name to be blasphemed, His honor to be taken away and given to another, His majesty thus to be insulted, and Himself to be reviled by arrogant and fallen man?

My brethren, I am greatly desirous that you should keep distinctly in view the object of what has now been said. It is not to prove the truth or falsity of either Unitarianism or the doctrine of the Trinity. I trust there is little need of showing you, who have been taught the Gospel in the Church, and who read the Bible for yourselves in humility and faith, how utterly worthless and abominable is the heresy of Socinus and his more modern followers. In what has been laid before you, I have wished to make it plain that we, who hold the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, and they who deny it, are as wide apart as the east is from the west. If they worship the true God, we do not; if we worship the true God, then they do not; if they are Christians, we are none; if we are Christians, then they are idolaters and blasphemers. Their so-called God is no God, if the Scripture be true, and if the Church in all ages up to the present has rightly apprehended its teaching; and therefore the Unitarian is in worse case than the Deist, because he professes to receive the Scripture as the Word of God, and yet grossly perverts or misunderstands its meaning. Let us beware lest we be led astray by this pernicious error; and let us seek to build up ourselves on our most holy faith. Let us receive

1) Rom. viii. 16.

2) Heb. x. 29.

this great mystery of the Trinity in Unity, in humble faith and confidence, because it is the teaching of God's holy Word.¹ Let us worship the Lord our God, knowing that He is one Lord; and while, "by the confession of a true faith, we acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty worship the Unity; let us beseech God to keep us steadfast in this faith;"² and let us pray continually, in the language of one of our Collects, that God would have mercy upon these and all deluded "heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of His Word; and that He would so fetch them home to His flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Him, and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen."³

1) This must be confessed a vast and an adorable mystery; too profound for man to penetrate, or distinctly to conceive. For, how should a poor worm be able to comprehend the perfections of an Infinite God? But since Revelation teaches that so it is; Reason agrees, that it ought to be received with an humble and submissive faith. As God hath not, so I think I might venture to say, that (according to those bounds of perfection, within which He has thought fit to limit the several beings created by Him) He could not let men into a complete knowledge of all the depths of the Deity. But then I add, that so much as He hath revealed, is sufficient to command our belief of those things which we cannot perfectly know.—DEAN STANHOPE, *On the Epistles and Gospels*, Vol. III. p. 112.

2) Collect for Trinity Sunday.

3) Third Collect for Good-Friday.



Trinity Sunday.

SERMON XXIII.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST TAUGHT BY ST. JOHN.

JOHN XX. 30, 31.—“Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.”

THE Gospel according to St. John was written, most probably, within a few years of the close of the first century, and not very long before the aged Apostle was called away to rest from his labors. That it differs in some respects from the other Gospels, even the most cursory reader must have observed. The other Evangelists give a plain, simple narrative of our Lord's life, miracles, and passion, interspersed with many of His instructive and touching parables. St. John, however, dwells more upon the pure and holy doctrines of the Redeemer; gives more in full His discourses to the Jews in His public teaching, and especially those to His disciples at the last supper; and asserts in the most unqualified terms, the essential and perfect Deity of our Lord and Master. It is hence not without reason, that this Gospel is regarded as in some sort supplemental to the others; not, as some have rashly and wickedly supposed, that the Beloved Disciple corrects the errors or mistakes of the Evangelists who had written before him; but because he mentions many things omitted by the others, at the same time omitting several incidents which they have narrated; and because

he treats fully of the person and office of the Divine Redeemer. In the text, which occurs just at the end of the Apostle's inspired account, he states briefly and comprehensively the main object which he had in view in composing his Gospel. Having finished the narrative of the last events in our Lord's sojourn on earth, His bitter sufferings and cruel death, and all the sad circumstances attending them, the Apostle concludes with establishing the fact of the Saviour's resurrection ; giving an account of His appearance to Mary Magdalene, and to His disciples on the evening of the same day ; and also of the unreasonable scruples of St. Thomas, in refusing to believe on the testimony of his fellow disciples, and except he himself saw and touched the marks of the wounds on the Redeemer's sacred person. Thus bringing to a close the good news which he was moved by the Holy Ghost to utter, he leaves it on record that "Jesus truly did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book," of the Apostle's ; but enough has been written to accomplish most satisfactorily the grand object he had before him : "These are written, (says he, in the words of the text,) that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name."

From this declaration, I think it evident that St. John finished his Gospel with the certain and full conviction, that what he had written was a firm ground of faith in the fact, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." He expressly tells us, that he has not recorded all, by any means, which the Saviour said and did. Doubtless, there were very many exhibitions of the Redeemer's power, love, and mercy, which none of the Evangelists have written for our learning. In the course of His eventful ministry of three or more years, during which he visited most of the cities and villages of Galilee and Judea, there must have been frequent opportunities for the display of those mighty gifts of the Spirit, which He possessed beyond measure. He must often have been called upon to relieve the distressed and needy, to comfort the poor and the wretched, and to administer to the mani-

fold wants of both soul and body ; and there can be no doubt that He heard the cry of the poor penitent, and scattered with no sparing hand the rich blessings which His advent bestowed upon the world. Yet, however many miracles our Lord performed, however many discourses and parables He uttered, and however many indications and proofs He gave of His Messiahship, which are not recorded in the New Testament, still it is a clear and solid inference from St. John's language, that what he has written does prove the point which he set out to prove, viz. that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And this, let it be noted, in direct contradiction to the heresies of the Apostolic age, which he very probably intended to confute, and to all the heresies of similar character in following ages. It may be noted, too, as something truly remarkable, that this Gospel, which has this object in view, viz. to lead men to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is professedly received as a part of Holy Writ, by men who deny entirely the very doctrine which the Apostle so plainly declares ! Hence, it may well be regarded as most astonishing, that a system which degrades the Saviour into a mere man, denying wholly His pre-existence, which robs Him of the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and which makes Him out to have lived to so little purpose, as barely to afford us an example of a holy and upright man ; I say, it cannot but appear most astonishing, that such a system can find countenance among those who read and study their Bibles with any degree of prayerful diligence and attention, and who have been shown, again and again, that the Divinity of Christ is the doctrine held "always, every where, and by all" of His disciples.—This, however, by the way; let me recall your attention and direct your thoughts to the more immediate object of this discourse; which is to prove and render clear, especially from St. John's Gospel, that we are required,

FIRST, *To have faith in Jesus Christ as the Divine Messiah ; and*

SECONDLY, *That eternal life is the result and the reward of this faith in His name.*

I. There can be no doubt that the Messiah had been long expected; throughout the Gospels we find continual mention of His coming, character, and office.¹ When John the Baptist, the messenger sent before the face of the Lord Jesus, came preaching the baptism of repentance, St. Luke tells us that the "people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not." The holy Baptist openly declared, "I am not the Christ;"² and bore full testimony to the right of our Saviour to that title. When Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, and another disciple, St. John himself, followed Jesus, the Lamb of God, and abode with Him that day, so great was their joy that they must needs impart of it to others; so Andrew "first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ."³ The woman of Samaria says confidently, expressing the universal belief at that time, "I know that Messias cometh, who is called Christ;"⁴ and when Jesus taught in the temple at the feast of tabernacles, "many of the people believed on Him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"⁵ Hence it clearly appears, that there was a general expectation of the Messiah to come, it being indeed an article of faith among all those who believed in the law of Moses; and that this particular period was looked upon as the divinely appointed time of His Advent. Now, that Jesus, our Redeemer, was the true Messias, is beyond doubt, because in Him, and in Him alone, centered all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and in Him alone did they have their complete fulfilment. Of this St. Philip assures us; for having found Nathanael, he "saith unto him, We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."⁶ He was "that

1) See THOLUCK's *Comment. on St. John*, p. 75.

2) Jno. i. 41.

4) Jno. iv. 25.

5) Jno. vii. 31.

2) Jno. i. 20.

6) Jno. i. 45.

Christ" which was to come, "the Son of the living God." In the words of the very learned Bishop Pearson; "He was in the world at the time the Messiah was to come, and no other at that time or since pretended; He was born of the same family, in the same place, after the same manner, which the prophets foretold of the birth of the Messiah; He taught all those truths, wrought all those miracles, suffered all those indignities, received all that glory which the Messiah was to teach, do, suffer, and receive; His doctrine was received in all nations, according to the character of the Messiah; and He was certainly the true Messiah. All these things were exactly fulfilled in Jesus, and in Him alone. We must therefore acknowledge and profess, that this Jesus is the promised Messiah, i. e. the Christ."¹ So far there is no dispute, except with the Jews, who still persist, strange to say, in expecting or looking for the Messiah, the promised Deliverer; and, indeed, there is no one who claims to be Christ's disciple, however much he may pervert the truth of Christianity in other respects, or in whatever light he may regard the Messiah, that makes any doubt about the fact of His having come, and of Jesus of Nazareth being the true Messiah. In consequence, however, of the existence and spread of a heresy of the most deadly character, it is rendered necessary to show, that Jesus Christ is not only the expected Messiah, but is also Divine, or is "the Son of God" in such a sense as no created being can be. St. John enables us to do this most fully, by the aid of his Gospel. The very first words, notwithstanding all the efforts which have been made to torture them out of their plain and undoubted signification, clearly prove the Divinity of the Saviour. "In the beginning was the Word,"² the only-begotten Son of the Father;³ He was, He existed in the beginning of all things, and so of course *before* all things created: He, the Word, was with God, possessed of glory with the Father before the world was;³ and not only so, but

1) BP. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 136.

2) Jno. i. 1, 14, 18.

3) Jno. i. 1; xvii. 5.

He, the Word, was God, one with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in essential Deity and power: this One, this Being, was (again says the Apostle) in the beginning with God.¹ With this clear announcement in the first two verses, the Evangelist goes on to declare the Word to be the Creator: "All things were made by Him,"² the whole universe of animate and inanimate substances; "and without Him was not any thing made that was made;" hence He, without whom nothing was made, must have existed *before* any thing was made; and He who was before any thing was made, was of course Himself *unmade*, i. e. He was eternal, the first, uncaused Cause of all things. Nor is it only in the opening sentence of his Gospel that St. John so positively asserts the Divinity of the Messiah; it runs throughout the whole of his inspired account; our Lord's discourses, His teaching, His miracles, His actions, are based upon this assumption of His being God manifest in the flesh. He "knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man;"³ "His disciples said unto Him, We are sure that thou knowest all things;"⁴ "My sheep hear my voice,* * and I give unto them eternal life;" "I and my Father are one;"⁵ "All things that the Father hath are mine;" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am;"⁶ before Abraham was born, I had a real being and existence, and so I saw him. "And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with thine Own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was;"⁷ "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will;" "All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."⁸ When the prophet Isaiah in a vision saw the King, the Lord of Hosts, and it was revealed unto him why men would not believe and obey, the Evangelist tells us that the prophet beheld the glory of Christ, and spake of Him;⁹ so that we are sure that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Lord of Hosts. I

1) Jno. i. 1; x. 30; xvi. 15; xvii. 10, 22, &c.

2) Jno. i. 3, 10.

3) Ib. ii. 24, 25.

4) Ib. xvi. 30.

5) Ib. x. 27, 28, 30.

6) Ib. viii. 58.

7) Ib. xvii. 5.

8) Ib. v. 21, 23.

9) Ib. xii. 41.

suppose that nothing more is needed to establish the Divinity of the Messiah;¹ the proofs which have been given from the Gospel of St. John alone, with many that have been omitted, are abundantly sufficient for this purpose; but if they be combined with those drawn from the other portions of Holy Writ, it will be seen that there is no doctrine more fully and entirely substantiated than this is; so that it becomes evident, that our faith is required to be toward Jesus Christ, the Son of God, equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit. St. John tells us that he wrote his Gospel in order that we might believe this fundamental doctrine; and every one can see for himself, that if we do not believe the Redeemer to be such as the Apostle declares Him to be, our belief is not that which he taught, our faith is not that which was once delivered to the saints.

II. But the Evangelist does not leave us without the comfortable assurance of the result of true faith in the Divine Redeemer; "these are written, that believing ye might have life through His name." Eternal life, through faith in the all-sufficient atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, expresses in few words, the intent of the whole scheme of redemption; it was for this that God manifested the wondrous

1) It was the Son of God who took our nature upon him, and in that nature made a full and sufficient oblation, satisfaction, and atonement for the sins of the world. It was the Father who accepted such oblation, satisfaction, and atonement, and in consequence forgave those sins. It was the HOLY SPIRIT who came forth from the FATHER and the SON, through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, by His enlightening, healing, and comforting grace, to apply to the hearts of men, for all the purposes of pardon, sanctification, and salvation, the merits and benefits of that oblation, satisfaction, and atonement. Say no more, then, that the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of curiosity and amusement only. OUR RELIGION IS FOUNDED UPON IT. For what is Christianity but a manifestation of the three Divine Persons as engaged in the great work of man's redemption, begun, continued, and to be ended by them, in their several relations of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, three Persons, one God? If there be no SON of GOD, where is our redemption? If there be no HOLY SPIRIT, where is our sanctification? Without both, where is our salvation? And if these two Persons be any thing less than Divine, why are we baptized equally in the name of the FATHER and of the SON and of the HOLY GHOST? Let no man therefore deceive you: "this (i. e. CHRIST) is the TRUE GOD and eternal life."—BR. HORNE, *Sermon on Matt. xxviii. 19.*

love which He had towards the world ; it was for this that " He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ;"¹ it was for this that He sent the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Lord and Giver of life. And the blessed Redeemer continually declares that this is the result of faith in His name. " He that believeth on Him is not condemned."² " Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death to life."³ Beloved brethren, have we this faith ? do we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and expect to have life through Him, and through Him alone ? Do we believe that it is only through His atonement, it is only because He was God as well as man, that we can be saved ? or does the proud, self-righteous opinion of those who deny the Lord that bought them, find place in our hearts, and influence our lives and conduct ? I do beseech you to remember, that we are answerable for the opinions we form or adopt respecting truth ; I do most earnestly entreat you to bear continually in mind, that *there is but one true faith*, and that according as we have or have not this faith, we shall be accepted or condemned. I have shown how fully St. John declares that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; which he does for the express purpose that we may believe in Him : I have shown also how undeniably he proves that our Lord is essentially and truly Divine, the very and eternal God : and I now declare unto you, that unless ye believe in Him, such as He is set forth by the Apostle to be, ye shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on you for ever. O flee to Him, then, ye who are without faith and living in sin ; " turn you to the strong-hold, ye prisoners of hope."⁴ Why will ye die, when life is so freely, so fully offered you ? Why will you not ask God aright, that you may receive the inestimable gift of faith in His only Son, who laid down His life for you and for all men ? And you who do believe, let me exhort

1) Jno. iii. 15, 16.

2) Ib. iii. 18.

3) Ib. v. 24.

4) Zech. ix. 12.

you to hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering ;” you have the true and holy faith of the Gospel, as taught in all ages by the one Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ ; continue steadfast in this faith : you are privileged to walk in the old paths in which millions have walked before you ; this is the good way ; walk therein with all diligence, and ye shall find rest for your souls.² “Build up yourselves (as St. Jude directs) on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, and keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”³

1) eb. x. 23.

2) Jer. vi. 16.

2) The best safeguard against danger is a great faith in our blessed Saviour, and steadfast following of His footsteps ; and the way to learn where his footsteps are to be found in the earth is to be steadfast in the fellowship and prayers of His Church, “walking in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless.” Therefore be diligent, to the best of your power, in keeping Holy to God every Day the Church has set apart ; for in this way you shall, year by year, grow wiser in the deep knowledge of the faith, and in the holiness of our Saviour’s life ; you will also feel yourselves to be members of the one Church of Apostles, Prophets, Saints, Martyrs, and of every just Spirit made perfect in the faith of Christ ; and compassed by this cloud of witnesses, and looking for all things to Him who is above all, you will live lives of stronger Faith and brighter Holiness, and like those that are gone before us, wash your robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.—BR. DOANE, “*The Rector’s Christmas Offering*,” 1842.

3) Jude 20, 21.



Holy Baptism.

SERMON XXIV.

BAPTISM NECESSARY TO SALVATION.

1 PETER iii. 21.—“Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.”)

A CORRECT knowledge and appreciation of the holy sacraments instituted by our Lord, are of the utmost moment for both sound faith and enlightened practice. Knowledge indeed we must have, or else we shall grope in the mists of darkness and ignorance; and the sacraments will profit us little or nothing, because we are not properly informed of what they really are, nor do we rightly use them: and a due appreciation of their value and importance we ought to have, or else we shall be liable to fall into the sin of abusing the means of grace provided by God in His Church. Now there is certainly a tendency to run into extremes on this as on most subjects; in fact, nearly every day shows how great is the danger of making too much or too little of the *means*, not duly considering the *end* of their institution. On the one hand may be seen the undue and unscriptural exaltation, and the idolatrous esteem, in which the sacraments are held; they, it is said, “imprinting a character upon the soul” of the recipient; they operating necessarily, notwithstanding his want of proper qualifications, and by an inherent virtue in them which triumphs over every obstacle. On the other hand, may be witnessed the almost contemptuous disregard of these specially appointed means of grace; the idea

prevailing very widely that they are only bare ceremonies, or simply observances, useful and edifying enough, it may be, as other rites and ceremonies are, but not the channels in which God has determined particular blessings to flow.¹ Neither of these views is held by the American branch of the Catholic Church; neither is supported by the Scriptures in their plain sense, and as interpreted by the standards of the Church, i. e., by the Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies.² It is my purpose, in this discourse, to endeavor to set forth, as much at large as time will allow, the true nature, object, and value of the holy sacrament of Baptism, guarding, if possible, against the two opposite and pernicious errors just glanced at; and to show that it is, in all ordinary cases, "necessary to salvation." The consideration of the other sacrament will be deferred to another opportunity.

I. The Apostle St. Peter, in the preceding part of the third chapter of this Epistle, had been exhorting husbands and wives respecting their duties one to the other; had declared the blessedness of unity and brotherly love; and especially insisted upon the necessity of enduring persecutions and afflictions for the name of Christ, and the holy religion which they profess. To this latter end, he adduced the example of the Lord Jesus Himself, who, though He was innocent of all offence, and did naught but good to man, yet was not exempt from suffering and bitter persecution. He "suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust;" therefore the disciple must not expect in these things to be above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. This topic, also, seems to have led the Apostle to speak of the long-suffering and mercy of God in the case of the antediluvians, who, for the space of one hundred and twenty years were warned of the approaching flood which was to destroy the ungodly;

1) See Bp. BURNET *On the Articles*, p. 266.

2) We take not Baptism nor the Eucharist for bare *resemblances* or memorials of things absent, neither for *naked signs* and testimonies assuring us of grace received before, but (as they are indeed and in verity) for means effectual whereby God when we take the sacraments delivereth into our hands that grace available unto eternal life, which grace the sacraments represent or signify.—HOOKER's *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. ch. lvii. §5.

Noah, meanwhile, steadily persevering in the preparation of the ark, in which he and his family were to be saved from death, notwithstanding the persecutions, and bitter taunts, and sneers, which we may well suppose were heaped upon him by the infidel and corrupt world of his day. Having spoken of the preservation of these eight persons, and the means by which it was accomplished, St. Peter adds the verse from which the text is taken, to show what was prefigured by this miraculous event:—"the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, (or, rather, the antitype to which event, i. e. the thing corresponding to, or represented by, the event just mentioned,) viz., baptism, doth also now save us, by or through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; (not, however, the baptism which only operates externally, as putting away of the filth of the flesh, but that in and by which the recipient is enabled to return the answer of a good conscience towards God, through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit.)" Now, my brethren, I beg you to note the force of the Apostle's language concerning Baptism, and to bear in mind the point of the illustration which he employs. Noah and his family were saved from destruction, at the time of the flood, by water. They were in the ark which God had commanded to be built, and which alone, because of His appointment, was enabled to ride out the awful storm of His just indignation and vengeance.¹ This was a literal salvation from temporal death and ruin. It was not effected by any natural forethought on the part of the patriarch. It was not accomplished by any means which he himself originated, or by any strength which he pos-

1) That deliverance (from the destruction of the world by the deluge) we learn to have been a figure of the Sacrament of Baptism; as the ark, containing Noah and his family, was a figure of the Church. None were then preserved whom that ark did not then bear upon the water; in like manner it is by Baptism, and in the Church only, that men can now be orderly (or ordinarily) saved, from their sins here and everlasting death hereafter.—DEAN STANHOPE, *On the Epistles and Gospels*, Vol. II. p. 575.

sessed; though, be it remembered, his agency was employed, and his obedience was absolutely necessary. This salvation, effected in this way, and by the means spoken of, is a type, or an apt and comforting emblem, of the spiritual salvation which our Saviour Christ has purchased; and which He holds out to us on certain conditions. He has provided the spiritual ark, which is His Church, into which we and all are commanded to enter, and in which, because He declares it, we may find safety amid the destroying flood of sin and corruption. He has appointed water to be used, in the name of the adorable Trinity, by His commissioned ministers; which element, as outwardly it cleanses the body, is a fit sign or symbol of the inward purification wrought by the grace and blood of Christ, through whom, and through whom alone, any and every mean of grace and help is made effectual to salvation. So that, in brief, from the type, viz., the saving of Noah and his family by water, we may learn the signification of the antitype, viz., Baptism; which “saves us,” because it is the mean appointed by God for placing us in a “state of salvation,” and for entitling us to all the privileges of the spiritual ark, which is His Church.¹

II. Baptism being, then, as St. Peter leads us to infer, in an especial manner connected with the salvation of mankind, it becomes necessary, lest this inference be thought too weighty in its consequences, to search and examine, whether Holy Scripture does not render it perfectly clear and certain, that in all ordinary cases, Baptism is necessary to salvation: that is to say, in every case where absolute necessity does not prevent,—(I mean by absolute necessity, where an individual is so Providentially circumstanced as that no one of

1) By the two great Apostles, Baptism is said to save us; *Baptism*, saith St. Peter, the antitype of the delivery in the flood, *doth save us*; that is, admitteth us into the ark, putteth us into the sure way of salvation; and *God*, saith St. Paul, *according to His mercy, saved us, by the laver of regeneration: and he that shall believe, and shall be baptized, shall be saved*, is our Saviour's own word and promise: *shall be saved*, that is, shall be put into a state and way of salvation, continuing in which state, proceeding in which way, he assuredly *shall be saved*; for faith there denoteth perseverance in faith, and Baptism implieth performance of the conditions therein undertaken.—DR. BARROW'S *Works*, Vol. VII. p. 74.

God's commissioned ministers can be had to dispense this sacrament;) in every case where no such necessity exists, Baptism is, according to God's Word, essential to salvation. That you may be thoroughly convinced of this truth, hear, I pray you, and mark well the testimony of Holy Scripture concerning Baptism. Just before our Lord's ascension into heaven, He gave command to His Apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, by baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; to preach the Gospel to every creature; and to proclaim in every region, and to every human being, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Here it must be observed that baptism is required of *all* men; it is made of *universal* obligation; and, whatever men may say or think, there is no other way, there are no other means in and by which we can become disciples of the Lord Jesus. As our Article teaches, Baptism is something more than a sign of profession; for it is the mark of difference, *whereby Christian men are discerned, or distinguished, from those who are not Christians.*¹ Moreover, repentance and faith, needful as they are, indispensable as the Scripture proclaims them to be, are not enough, when understood as they too generally are in these days of infidel tampering with God's holy truth; for, when St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached the glad tidings of great joy to all people, and when his auditors were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, what shall we do? the answer was, "repent, and *be baptized every one of you* in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."² Our Master Himself, whose words I have just given, says expressly, "he that believeth *and is baptized*, shall be saved."³ When Philip, the deacon, went down to Samaria, preaching the Gospel, all who believed were baptized by him. And the Ethiopian eunuch, after Philip had preached unto him Jesus, openly declared, I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God: but was this regarded as enough? No; the ministering servant of

1) See Article XXVII.

2) Acts ii. 37, 38.

3) Mark xvi, 16.

the Lord had taught him better ; and so far from this profession of faith being sufficient, without the holy sacrament, we are told, that when they came to a place where was water, Philip baptized him, leaving him to go on his way rejoicing. When St. Peter, by command of the Holy Spirit, was sent to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to Cornelius and others, while he was doing thus, the Holy Ghost fell on them ; they spake with tongues, and magnified God. Surely, in the case of these, if any, Baptism might have been dispensed with. Here, if any where, here, where repentance was so deep and sincere, and faith so strong and unwavering ; here, where many had been baptized with the Holy Ghost, it might be supposed that the outward and visible sign, the Baptism with water, in the name of the Trinity, was not a necessary thing ;¹ but what said St. Peter on this occasion ? “ Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”²

In addition to these instances, and many others which the diligent reader of Holy Scripture will easily find, let me call your attention, especially, to the passage selected by the Church for the Gospel in the Office for Baptism of those of

1) What is St. Peter's inference from these miraculous gifts ? is it that the persons on whom they rested had no need of Baptism ? No ; but that these extraordinary gifts were an evidence that God had a favor for them, and saw their sincerity, and thus was pleased to testify that they were fit objects for Baptism. Accordingly he took care that they should immediately be made Disciples, who had this evidence of being believers before. “ Can any man (says he) forbid water, that these should not be baptized,” &c. So far is the Baptism of the Spirit, even where that is undeniable, from excluding the Baptism of water ; so far any of the extraordinary methods of grace, from intending to break in upon and overturn the regular establishments and orders of the Church. And sure one cannot wish a stronger proof than the instance before us, that the outward washing is not merely a figure or representation of the inward, in this Sacrament ; but a right of initiation, and an essential part of the Sacrament : and, that the graces of the Holy Spirit may be the foundation of a just claim to Baptism ; but never (where that Sacrament can be had) a lawful dispensation to any man, for the refusal or neglect of it.—DEAN STANHOPE, *On the Epistles and Gospels*, Vol III. p. 124. Lond. ed. 1751.

2) Acts x. 47, 48.

Riper Years. It is contained in the third chapter of the Gospel according to St. John: Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night, for instruction in the ways of righteousness. The Divine Redeemer, with all the force and solemnity which language possesses, said unto him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, strangely misconceiving the Saviour's words, He spake again, more plainly, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Now, beloved, (says the Church,) ye hear in this Gospel the express words of our Saviour, Christ; . . . whereby ye may perceive the great necessity of this sacrament, where it may be had;" ye may understand that it is to us and to all men who can obtain it, "necessary to salvation; . . . a means whereby we receive inward and spiritual grace, and a pledge to assure us thereof;" and also the mean in and by which we are "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven."¹ I shall not now enter upon the consideration of the many other passages of Scripture relating to this holy sacrament. Let me, however, earnestly entreat you to turn to the New Testament for yourselves, and read it with care and prayerful diligence; and I have no fears or doubts as to the result. You will both learn the necessity of Baptism to salvation, and be enabled to comprehend and realize the blessings and privileges which it bestows.

III. Of these blessings and privileges I shall be enabled at this time to give only a brief account. In the first place, it must never be forgotten, that all men are conceived and born in sin; all men are corrupt by nature, and inclined to evil rather than good; and all mankind are children of wrath and condemnation. In this natural state, they cannot please God; and whatsoever they do, forasmuch as it springs not of faith in Jesus Christ, is not pleasant to God; it is not done as He hath willed and commanded.² In this natural state,

1) See the Church Catechism.

2) See Article XIII.

too, they are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God ; concerning which we have no certain knowledge, and can only hope, that grace and favor may be extended to some at least of the myriads who go down to the grave without "the washing of regeneration." And, in fine, by nature we have no claim to favor ; we have no ground to hope or expect the blessing of God here, and happiness hereafter ; we have neither light nor strength to see, or walk in, the true and living way ; or, as St. Paul expresses it, we "have no hope, and are without God in the world."¹ But although such is the miserable and helpless condition of the race of man since the fall, still God has mercifully been pleased to provide a remedy. He has supplied the means, whereby the sinner may obtain pardon through the atoning blood of Christ, and sanctification and enlightening by the Holy Ghost. He has freely offered to take man out of the state of misery and condemnation in which he is born ; to place him in a new state, wherein is covenanted to him, on certain conditions, every thing he could hope for or desire ; and to make him a child of God by adoption, a member of Christ's Church, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Now, my brethren, Baptism is the appointed means whereby God is pleased to put us in the way of, and to convey to us the right and title to, the blessings of the new covenant. In and by this holy sacrament, He not only affords us strength more than sufficient (if rightly and diligently used) to counteract the evil and corrupt tendency of our nature, but also (if we are truly penitent and believing) washes, and sanctifies us with the Holy Ghost, delivers us from His wrath, and receives us into the ark of Christ's Church ; that, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, we may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally we may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with the Lord, world without end.²

You have thus seen what is the object of Holy Baptism, its value as connected with our salvation, and its universal

1) Eph. ii. 12.

2) Office for Public Baptism of Infants.

obligation. But let me caution you against the fatal error which might perhaps arise out of what has been said. Baptism acts not as a charm, so that they who are baptized shall certainly be eternally saved; it does not possess any inherent virtue or efficacy, whereby it operates necessarily, without regard to the qualifications of heart and mind; it has no essential power, by which it can compensate for the lack of penitence, faith, and obedience, or ward off the just judgments denounced against impenitence, unbelief, and devotion to this perishing world. No, my brethren; these are unscriptural and exceedingly dangerous errors; and God forbid that aught which I have said should be so perverted, or misconceived, as that any baptized member of Christ's Church should be induced to rest in his Baptism, and continue in sin. Let not, however, this explicit declaration serve in any wise as countenancing the opposite extreme, whereby this holy sacrament is degraded into a bare, lifeless ceremony, which may be used or neglected according to each one's fancy or convenience.¹ Baptism is vastly more than this; it cannot be dispensed with by any one; it is necessary to the salvation of every one who can obtain it; it is the only way in which we can become Christians; the only way in which we can enter the Church of God; the appointed way by which we obtain remission of our sins, and are entitled to the favor of God here, and eternal salvation hereafter. While Baptism is only the means to a certain end, yet let it be remembered that it is the Divinely instituted means; that the Redeemer Himself has tied down the

1) Seeing that grace is a consequent of sacraments, a thing which accompanieth them as their end, a benefit which he that hath receiveth from God Himself the Author of sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them, it may be hereby both understood that sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural is not in all respects as food unto natural life, because they contain *in themselves* no vital force or efficacy, they are not physical, but *moral instruments* of salvation, duties of service and worship which, unless we perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable. For all receive not the grace of God who receive the sacraments of His grace. Neither is it *ordinarily* His will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any, but by the sacraments.—HOOKER'S *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. ch. lvii. § 4.

promise of salvation to THOSE ONLY *who believe and are baptized*; and that He has said, in terms equally clear and positive, no one of the human family can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate, and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost.

I insist so strongly upon this matter, my brethren, because of the too prevailing sentiment respecting the holy sacrament of Baptism; and I do desire most earnestly, to impress upon you the solemn truths which have been recited in your ears on this occasion; especially do I call upon those who are unbaptized, or whose children have not yet been initiated into Christ's holy Church; and with, I trust, a full sense of the awful responsibility resting upon me, as the ministering servant of the Lord among you, I call upon you to remember, that you have no claim to the mercy or the favor of God; you have never been made Christians; and you never can be entitled to this name, or to the privileges of Christ's Church, except you are washed in the laver of regeneration; you can have no well-grounded hope of salvation; you can have no reason to expect either light or strength from above; and you will have to lie down in your graves with the heavy consciousness of having been disobedient, wilfully so, and unfaithful to your Lord's commands. And as for your children, (ye who have kept them away from the font of purification,) while the fault and the sin is all your own, *they* are suffering the evil consequences; and naught that you or I or any can do, will make up for the lack of being "born of water, and of the Holy Ghost." Let me, then, discharge my imperative duty, by urging upon you the commands of our Divine Master; let me entreat you to give good heed to them; for what or how can you answer it at the last day, if you wilfully neglect to obey Him now in your day of probation? how can ye excuse yourselves, when God calleth you to repent and be baptized; and to bring your children to Him, that He may fold them in the arms of His love, and bless them with His Holy Spirit? But as for us, who "have by Baptism put on Christ, it is our part and duty, being made the children of God and

of the light, by faith in Jesus Christ, to walk answerably to our Christian calling, as becometh the children of light; remembering always that Baptism representeth unto us our profession; which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.”¹

1) Office for Baptism of those of Riper Years.



Holy Baptism.

SERMON XXV.

FAITH AND BAPTISM.

MARK xvi. 16.—“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”

It is a lamentable thing that language, plain, pointed, and forcible as it may be, is liable to misapprehension and perversion. It is, perhaps, impossible to express truth in such a way, and to guard it on all sides so securely, as that it will not in some cases be misunderstood and misused, or that the skilful casuist may not by his subtle distinctions, and plausible explanations, evade the force of any language whatsoever. Especially to be regretted is it, that there is so much variance and strife respecting Scriptural truth, or what is taught and bound upon us by the revealed Word of God. The innumerable strange, wild, and lawless opinions, the manifold contradictory tenets, and the unchristian and profane speculations, which have at different times been set forth as either *the* truth, or founded directly upon the truth of the Gospel, all show how easy it is, under certain circumstances, to misapprehend and pervert the meaning of Scripture. The genuine, original Quaker, for instance, denies the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the divine origin and authority of the Scriptures, the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and the institution and perpetuation of the Church of Christ; while the written Word is full and clear on all these points.

The Socinian, denying the Lord who bought him, degrades the adorable Redeemer into a mere man, refuses to believe in the depravity of human nature, thinks himself perfectly compass, as potent by his own strength to serve God acceptably, and a consequence, makes void the grand doctrine of atonement and the agency and office of the Holy Ghost; whereas the Scriptures do most certainly teach these very doctrines, which he is at so much pains to deny and strive to overturn. The older Calvinists, following and even going farther than their great leader, deny the doctrine of universal redemption, suppose that God offers eternal life to those who cannot possibly obtain it, or that the everlasting condition of all men is fixed by some secret, irreversible, irrespective decree, a part decreed to be saved, a part to be lost; or, to use their own words, (and fearful words they are,) they suppose "that God is the sole and genuine cause of all things, willing and making the wicked to live in their lusts, and that hence there is a *necessity* of sinning, inasmuch as God has imposed it;"¹ they suppose, I say, such things, while at the same time we find it written in plain terms in Scripture, that Christ died for *all men*; that He taketh away the sins of the *world*; and that *whosoever* will, may take the water of life freely; and still more, that God is not willing that

1) "Deum solitariam et genuinam cunctorum esse causam, volens et efficiens ut impii in suis cupiditatibus vivant; et proinde peccandi necessitas quoad Deum imponeri."—TRIGLAND. *Defens.* fol. 172.

"Homines nihil possunt, sive consulere, sive velle, nisi quod Deus ipsis inspirat aut indit, bonum malumve fuerit; ita ut is actu quoque hominum manus moderetur, ut modo vincas eas teneat, modo flectat horsum, retrorsum, quod illud quod prædestinavit, efficiat."

"Men have no power either to consult or to will, whether it be good or evil, unless God inspire or enable them; so that He guides the hands of men in act, at one time holding them bound fast, at another, turning them hither and thither, in order to accomplish what he has predestinated."—*De Prædest.* p. 842-3; quoted in "*Fur Prædestinatus*," p. 24.

Perhaps this note cannot be better concluded than in the words of John Calvin;—"Atqui stultum, et temerarium est de rebus incognitis altius inquirere, quam Deus nobis scire permittit."—"Foolish and rash is it to search into hidden things more deeply than God permits us to have knowledge."—*Instit.* lib. iii. c. 25, § 6. Strange expression this, when the system which is peculiarly Calvin's own, in contradistinction to the theology of the Catholic Church, is little else save a mere tissue of speculation about things unknown and unrevealed to finite man!

any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance, and by faith in the Saviour obtain everlasting life.¹ The Romanist, induced by the assumptions and perversions of ambitious and ungodly men in former days, gives assent to the usurped authority of the Bishop of Rome; makes faith in it "the sum and foundation of the Christian religion; and states, that to deny it is not only a simple error, but a pernicious heresy;"² and, as following upon this wickedness, believes in all the abominations and absurdities of "honoring" or "venerating," i. e. in fact, of worshipping angels, images, and saints; of infallibility, transubstantiation, purgatory, indulgences, and the host of attendant corruptions;³ while it is certain, that the Word of God affords not a shadow of evidence in support of any of these wicked and soul-destroying tenets.

And so I might go on, and illustrate the general remarks with which I set out, by bringing before you the opinions and practices of most of the sects and denominations by which we are surrounded; but this is not needful on the present occasion, and would embrace a subject too wide for consideration at this time and in this place. Neither must it be inferred from the various contradictory schemes, tenets and speculations, which have been noticed or alluded to, that the truth of the Gospel cannot be clearly and satisfactorily ascertained. No man will deny that there are difficulties in the way, and that these difficulties have been much increased, especially in respect to a large portion of the community, by

1) 2 Pet. iii. 9.

2) REV. CHARLES LESLIE'S "*Letter to a Converted Deist*," Vol. I. Parish Library, p. 75.

3) It is impossible to refrain from speaking out the deep conviction, that the Latin Church is in a state of schism which amounts to a fearful apostacy. (See 1 Tim. iv. 1—3; 2 Thess. ii. 3—12.) . . . The Council of Trent embodied in its decrees all the corruptions which had been accumulating for ten centuries. Separation from her became a duty, because she had separated from Apostolic faith and order. Yet England did not excommunicate Rome, but left it for her to fill up the measure of her iniquities by excommunicating England.—REV. DR. JARVIS, *Sermon on Christian Unity*, p. 26, 42.

The Church of Rome, though not like the Protestant sects of England and Continental Europe, the offspring of innovation, has yet tampered with Christian verity till its very life-blood is contaminated, and it reeks with impure humors at every pore.—BP. WHITTINGHAM, *Matriculation Sermon*, 1836, p. 24.

the many and lamentable schisms and heresies of the last three hundred years ; but still the revealed Word remains the same ; and by careful and diligent search, using the helps which are within his reach, and which are needful in order to arrive at a sound conclusion, every man can find out what the truth of the Gospel is, and what is his bounden duty in consequence. Habitual and solemn reading of the Bible, comparing one part with another, diligently attending to the object of the sacred writer, the persons addressed, the circumstances of the case, and the immediate context ; constantly bearing in mind the habits, the prejudices, and well known sentiments of those of or to whom the Evangelist or Apostle is speaking ; striving as far as possible, to place ourselves in their circumstances, and with their preconceived notions ; making use of the help afforded by the testimony, interpretation, and decision of the Church in regard to truth ; and especially, praying without ceasing for the enlightening aid of the Holy Ghost, will most assuredly enable us to know what is "the mind of the Spirit," or what is the truth of God's most holy Word :—and without we make use of these means, without we continually strive both to know and to do the will of God, we have no safeguard against error, we have no certainty concerning truth.

Were there that carefulness in this matter, that willingness to lay aside prejudice, and that hearty determination to know, by the blessing of God, which there ought to be, there is little room for doubt, that many of the controversies which have been raised within a few hundred years past, would soon be set at rest. And the passage which has been selected as the text, would hardly be practically despised by the Quaker, or really perverted by the Baptist, as he is commonly called ; it would not be passed over, with a multitude of other passages, by the former, as having no force to convince him of the necessity of Baptism with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; nor would it be adduced by the latter as in any way forbidding the Baptism of infants, when in fact this is a question with which the text has nothing to do. It will therefore be my endeavor to

set forth the true meaning of these words, and to show how they have been perverted so as to support certain errors of the present day.

I. By reference to the last chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, it will be found that after the Saviour's resurrection, "he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." The great Head of the Church here announces to those whom He had chosen, and whom He was about to send forth to discharge the high duties of their office, what, in few words, are to be the terms of salvation of that Gospel which they are to preach:—he that believeth, and shows that he really believes, by being baptized, he shall be saved; but he that refuses to believe, he that will not seek to have that true faith which God offers to all who ask for it aright, he shall be condemned.¹

Two things are here mentioned by our blessed Redeemer as necessary to salvation, faith and Baptism. The first is

1) "He that believeth and is baptized," &c. Here the word *saved* amounts to the same thing in the main with *justified*, being opposed to condemned; and it is farther observable, that the believing here must be understood of a lively faith; yet that alone is not said to save or justify, but with the addition of *Baptism*, or in and with the use of *Baptism*: for whatever some may please to teach of *faith only* as *justifying*, the *exclusive term*, most certainly, is not to be understood in opposition, either to the *work* of the *Father*, or of the *Son*, or of the *Holy Ghost*, or to the standing *means* of conveyance which they have chosen. The warmest contenders for faith alone, are content to admit that the *exclusive term alone*, is opposed only to every thing else *on man's part*, in *justifying*, not to any thing *on God's part*: now I have already noted that *Baptism* is an *instrument* in *God's* hand, who *bears His part* in it; and therefore, *Baptism*, in this view, relates to *God's part* in *justifying*, and not to *man's*. It is not, indeed, said in the text just cited, that he who is not *baptized* shall be damned, as it is said of him who *believeth not*. God reserves to Himself a liberty of dispensing in that case. At the same time, He has made no promise or covenant to *justify* any one *without* the use of *Baptism*: so that still *Baptism* must be looked upon as the *ordinary standing instrument of justification on God's part*; and we have no certain warrant for declaring any one *justified* independently of it.—DR. WATERLAND, "*Summary View of the Doctrine of Justification*," p. 9.

absolutely necessary in *all* cases, for it is only by faith in His merits and atonement, that we can have any hope of pardon or acceptance with God. This lies at the very foundation of the spiritual life, and it would be as impossible for the body to move itself, and exhibit its various powers, without the soul, or principle of life, as it would for the soul to become new in its purposes, affections, and desires, without that living principle of faith in the Divine Redeemer, which is implanted and fostered by the Holy Ghost. By it we are led to realize our needs and our inability to help ourselves; by it we lay hold upon the promises of the Saviour, and have the comfortable assurance that He died for our sins, and that through His all-atoning sacrifice we are pardoned, and may obtain eternal life. Faith, moreover, leads us directly to seek the aid of the Holy Spirit, without whom we are and can be nothing, and so to trust in Him and His almighty assistance, that we both receive and assent to all that He has told us in the Scriptures, and do whatsoever He has commanded us to do. There is no one who has heard of the Saviour but what may believe in Him, but what must believe in Him, if he would be saved; for there is no greater dishonor which man can do to God, than to refuse to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, after He has done so many and so great things for him. Since the Almighty Lord has condescended so low as to work out our salvation, and to hold out the promise of eternal life through His only Son, our Saviour, to us guilty men; if we will not hear, believe, and obey, if we despise His promises, and make light of His threatenings, by our unbelief, is there any thing more that we can do to insult and dishonor our Creator and Redeemer? Surely God can do nothing further, consistently with His truth, than He has done; and it will ever remain, from the very nature of the case, most infallibly true, that "he that believeth not, shall be condemned."

But beside, or in addition to the faith here spoken of by our Lord, something more is needful; it is not enough to believe merely, when this belief leads to no "works" of godliness: our Saviour does not say, he that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth and *is baptized*, shall be saved.

With faith Baptism must conjoin, in order to put us in a "state of salvation," and at last, through the Saviour's merits, give us entrance into heaven. And this for the plain reason that Baptism is the only means of entering upon the new state of Christian privileges and duties, or the new relation in which we stand to God; for (as our Catechism expresses it) "being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are hereby (i. e. in Baptism) made the children of grace." Our gracious Master appointed this sacrament as a token of His love, as a pledge to assure us of the reality and efficacy of His promises, and as a means whereby we receive not only the grace of the Holy Spirit, but also the right and title to all the blessings and favors of being in covenant with God. It is the way, and the only way, by which we become members of the Church of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; and however needful faith may be declared to be, and it is truly *indispensable*, yet Baptism, we are assured by our Lord, is *as* needful, though, in cases of necessity, *not* indispensable. In some cases, it may well happen that Baptism cannot be obtained; as when the penitent thief on the cross believed on the crucified Redeemer; or when, in the dispensation of God, men are so situated that no one of His ministering servants can be had to perform this sacred ordinance of the Master Himself; but where Baptism can be obtained, (as it can easy enough among us, my brethren,) our Saviour makes it positively binding on all men, not only to believe, but to make proof of their faith by being baptized.¹ He does not say, it is true,

1) The true necessity of Baptism, a few propositions considered, will soon decide. All things which are either known causes or set means, whereby any great good is usually procured, or men delivered from grievous evil, the same we must needs confess necessary. And, if regeneration were not in this very sense a thing necessary to eternal life, would Christ Himself have taught Nicodemus that to see the kingdom of God is impossible, saving only for those men which are born from above? His words following in the next sentence are a proof sufficient, that to our regeneration His Spirit is no less necessary than regeneration itself necessary unto life. Thirdly, unless as the Spirit is a necessary inward cause, so water were a necessary outward means to our regeneration, what construction should we give unto those words wherein we are said to be new born, and that ἐξ ὕδατος, even of water? Why are we taught that with water God doth purify and cleanse His Church? (Eph. v. 26.) Wherefore do the Apostles of Christ term Baptism a bath of regeneration? (Tit. iii. 5.) What

that he who is not baptized shall be damned, as He does of him who believes not ; yet let it be remembered, and let it be weighed well by all, that *the PROMISE of salvation is to THOSE ONLY who believe and are baptized.* However they may be dealt with who are not born again of water and the Holy Ghost, it is perfectly certain, that the text is plain to the point of its necessity in all ordinary cases. Therefore I say, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ;" he shall be in a state of salvation here, having the promise and the right to all the blessings which the Saviour bestows upon His Church ; and he shall, by living faith and trust in Him, be eternally saved in the world to come.

II. Such, I conceive, is the true meaning and extent of the language of the text. Let us now see (as was proposed) what connection it has with some prevalent errors among ourselves.

1. Within less than two hundred years past, there has arisen a sect, styled by themselves Friends, but better known by the name of Quakers. Setting out with extravagant and unscriptural notions of the workings of the Spirit in or upon the soul, or of the inward light which He vouchsafes, they were led, in their fanatical violence, to despise and undervalue every thing external, sacraments, ordinances, the ministry, the Church, and outward acts of worship ; and thus, by their excessive enthusiasm on one point, to sweep away the main and essential doctrines of Scripture, and profess principles which would destroy the evidence of the divine origin of Christianity.¹ As a matter of course, they deny the sacrament of Baptism, thinking it neither needful nor becoming, as they have something superior to all outward things, something which, they suppose, supersedes sacraments, and every thing else. But, my brethren, let it be asked, on what grounds can the Quaker, who professes, in a degree at least, to reverence the written Word of God, reject

purpose had they in giving man advice to receive outward Baptism, and in persuading them it did avail to remission of sins? (Acts ii. 38.) HOOKER'S *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. ch. lx. § 1.

1) REV. CHAS. LESLIE'S "*Short and Easy Method with a Deist*," Parish Library, Vol. I. p. 57.

Baptism with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? When our divine Lord says, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;" "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, cannot see the kingdom of God,"¹ or cannot enter his kingdom, the Church militant here, or his kingdom, the Church triumphant hereafter; when He commands His Apostles, just before His ascension, to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them;" is there no *meaning* to His words? and can it be possible that His holy Apostles, acting under inspiration, could so mistake His meaning, as to go and fulfil His command *literally*, when He did not intend to lay any stress or importance on Baptism with water, in the name of the Trinity?² To my mind it is

1) Jno. iii. 3, 5.

2) Perhaps it may to some seem needless to bestow very great attention upon the grievous perversions of Holy Scripture, on the part of the Puritans of old, and the Quakers, not to say many others in later times; yet, as the sound interpretation of the Word of God is of the utmost moment to our eternal well-being, I cannot forbear quoting the eloquent, and almost indignant, vindication of the truth in this matter, which that learned and judicious divine, Mr. Richard Hooker, has given us in his *Eccles. Polity*,—thus: "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of Sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words as alchymy doth or would do the substance of metals, making of any thing what it listeth; and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing. Or howsoever such voluntary exercise of wit might be borne with otherwise, yet in places which usually serve, as this doth, (Jno. iii. 5,) concerning regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost, to be alleged for grounds and principles, less is permitted. To hide the general consent of antiquity, agreeing in the literal interpretation, they cunningly affirm that 'certain' have taken those words, as meant of material water, when they know that *of all the ancients, there is not one to be named* that ever did otherwise either expound or allege the place than as implying external Baptism. Shall that which hath *always received this and no other construction*, be now disguised with the toy of novelty? Must we needs, at the only show of a critical conceit, without any more deliberation, utterly condemn them of error, which will not admit that fire, in the words of John, is quenched with the name of the Holy Ghost, or with the name of the Spirit, water dried up in the words of Christ? When the letter of the law hath two things plainly and expressly specified, Water and the Spirit; Water as a duty required on our parts, the Spirit as a gift which God bestoweth; there is danger in presuming so to interpret it, as if the clause which concerneth ourselves were more than needeth. We may by such rare expositions attain perhaps

perfectly astonishing, that men can bring themselves to such practical contempt for the express and plain commands of the Saviour. The extravagances of popery do not much, if any, exceed those of quakerism ; and both, though in different ways, are destructive of the purity and simplicity of Gospel truth. The Papist sets up his tradition, or unwritten Scripture, as of equal authority with the written Word. The Quaker, on the other hand, boasts of his inward light, or of the “influences of the Spirit,” of which *he* is sensible, as superior to, as above the Word of truth written by inspiration.¹ In direct and full opposition to the error or contempt of the latter, in respect of Baptism, the language of the Saviour, in the text, will ever remain, and ought to keep us and all men from any such daring violations of His commands.

2. Allusion has been made to error of another kind, which is also of very recent origin, that of the Baptists, as they are commonly called, or, more properly, the Antipædo-Baptists or Adult Baptists. They, as is well known, oppose Infant Baptism on the ground that infants are not capable of receiving Baptism, or are not qualified to be partakers of it ; because, say they, infants cannot have repentance and faith, and without these no one can be fit for Baptism. The words of our Saviour, in the text, are frequently brought forward in support of these opinions : “ he that believeth and is bap-

in the end to be thought witty, but with ill advice.”—HOOKER’s *Eccles. Polity*, Book V. ch. lix. § 2.

1) Those who pretend to believe the Scriptures, and yet reject the mysteries of our holy religion, are, in fact, infidels, because they deny the faith which was once delivered to the saints. They who extol faith, to the exclusion of reason, in matters of religion, as the Romanists do, do thereby obscure the light of revelation, and blind the eye of reason. To these may be added our modern enthusiasts, who resolve not only reason, but revelation also, into a strong and confident faith ; yea, into certain imaginary impulses and inward sensations, which they call the motions of the Holy Spirit, or light within, and to which they wholly give themselves up, in opposition to all the convictions of Scripture and common sense, which happen to contradict their favorite opinions. But the true man of God receives all these lights with great thankfulness and joy, as a lantern to his feet and a light unto his paths : he accepts them as the best of gifts from the Father of lights ; and uses them all in their proper order, and respective degrees, to the glory of God, and His own and others’ benefit.—WOGAN *On the Lessons*, Vol. II. p. 70.

tized, shall be saved," means, they say, that every one must believe before he can be baptized; because believing, here and elsewhere, is placed before Baptism, and so must of course precede it in every one coming to this sacrament. But of whom is the Saviour here speaking? of those capable of exercising faith, or of those also who are incapable of faith? most clearly, of those only who have arrived at such an age that they can exercise repentance and faith; and for this plain reason, that we cannot for a moment suppose God will punish any one for the want of that which he could not have; it is highly derogatory to His justice and mercy, to think that where faith is not possible, as in the case of infants, lunatics, and idiots, He will punish them for the absence of it. The simple meaning of the text, then, is this, that he that is capable of faith, and has it not, shall certainly perish; and it has nothing to do with the question of Infant Baptism; because if it be said that the want of faith excludes them from Baptism, most undoubtedly the want of faith excludes them from salvation; "he that believeth not, shall be damned," says the Saviour; infants do not, and cannot believe; therefore, if the Baptist notion be true, infants cannot be saved;—and what a horrible and unchristian doctrine is that!

It is not my intention, however, to enter at large upon the question of the right, and the necessity of Infant Baptism; that I purpose to do in another discourse; it is enough for the present, to have shown that the text has no connection with this subject, or that it does not mark out or define all the individuals, or classes, to whom Baptism may be, and ought to be applied. It is of more especial moment, at this time, to speak a word or two of exhortation to those who may incautiously, or unwittingly, have adopted erroneous sentiments on the subject of Baptism, its advantages, and its necessity in all ordinary cases. To every one before me, who is disposed to think lightly or irreverently of this holy sacrament, the Saviour's words ought to come home as a solemn and impressive warning. It is not for us to cavil, and say, what *use* is it to us, or our children, to be bap-

tized; it is enough for us to know, that "thus saith the Lord;" it is enough for us to know, that the promise of salvation is to those only who believe, and are in a covenant state with Him by Baptism; and on no other condition, my brethren, can I hold out to you any offers of mercy or pardon. If those who have the means of obtaining Baptism for themselves or their children, despise it, or undervalue it, or think it of little importance; if those who hear, and by the blessing of God, can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, do not seek for living faith in Him; what shall be their lot in the last day of account? Let us lay it to heart, we who have been baptized, that Baptism will profit us nothing without living, active faith in the Divine Redeemer: ah, it will rather increase our heavy responsibility, and add to our shame and misery; if we believe not, we shall be condemned, and the portion of the wicked shall be ours for ever. "Whatsoever is born of God, (by water and the Holy Spirit,) says the beloved Disciple, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."¹

1) 1 Jno. v. 4.

Holy Baptism.

SERMON XXVI.

INFANTS ENTITLED TO HOLY BAPTISM.

MARK X. 14 — "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God."

FEW among the recorded sayings of the gracious Redeemer are more full of touching and heartfelt interest than this. To the parent's heart it commends itself as the precious promise and assurance of the Lord of glory, how carefully and how tenderly He watches over the "lambs" of His flock, how kindly He calls them to His arms, blesses them with His Holy Spirit, and makes them His children by adoption ; and how he blames those who keep them away, and do not believe in the reality of His good will thus expressed, or in the certainty of the blessings which He holds out. The occasion, too, on which our Saviour uttered these gracious words gives them additional interest and force. His disciples, it seems, like many in the present day, thought that young children were beneath their Master's notice ; and in their zeal they rebuked those parents who brought their offspring to receive His blessing, and be enfolded in the arms of His love. But He who knew all things, and who cared for the young immortals lent to parents, was greatly displeased at this conduct of His disciples, and said, in the words of the text, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God : " thus leaving His people a command which methinks every parent would be most eager to obey ; a command full of comfort, and admitting to the richest privi-

leges; and declaring unto us that “of such” as these little ones “is the kingdom of God” composed, the kingdom of God both here and in heaven, the Church militant and the Church triumphant. Hence we are naturally and properly led to consider the subject to which these words of our Divine Lord are applied by the Church, viz. the necessity and the propriety of Infant Baptism; and it will be my endeavor to state plainly the grounds on which it is held to be our duty to have our children baptized into Christ’s Church: I shall also seek to give brief and sufficient answers to the most common objections which have been raised, and which have led some parents to the injustice of depriving their offspring of the benefits and blessings of the new covenant.

I. In our efforts to arrive at the true meaning and intent of God’s Word, it is of special importance that reference be had to the time, and to the common sentiments of the day, when the New Testament was written; or, in other words, that we place ourselves in the situation of those to whom the Gospel was first preached, and among whom the Church of Christ was first planted. No one, who neglects this evidently proper course, can be said to pay that due respect which the Word of truth demands; and can scarcely hope that his own unaided powers, now that nearly two thousand years have elapsed since the days of the Apostles, can enable him to escape error, and find out the truth. Certain it is, that no man thinks of acting in this way when any other book than the Bible is to be examined and understood, or when any other subject than the most momentous of all subjects is called in question. In all cases, when we desire to know the meaning of any ancient writing, we have recourse immediately to the history, customs, manners, sentiments, &c., of the times and the people concerning whom we wish information; and we interpret whatever is difficult or doubtful, in accordance with historical facts and prevailing customs. Now, if we let it be our care to keep distinctly before us the state of things in the first ages, I am certain that our labor will be greatly lessened, and our edification as greatly promoted. All who are in the habit of reading the Bible, know that the Jews were the chosen people

of God ; that with them the Lord made a covenant ; that for many centuries they were the only people who possessed a knowledge of the true God and of His laws ; and that they clung to their religion, with all its accompanying rites and ceremonies, with a tenacity and steadfastness never elsewhere exhibited. It is also well known, that this covenant positively required,¹ under a heavy penalty, that every infant be made a partaker of it ; so that in this way he became “a debtor to do the whole law,”² and was laid under the curse denounced against “every one that continued not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Thus we see, the capacity or fitness of infants, and their undoubted right to become members of the Church of God, was established by the Lord Himself ; and every Jew grew up with these principles implanted in him, and would as soon thought of cutting himself off from the covenant and its blessings, as of admitting a doubt or question concerning the right and the heritage of his children.

This state of things, and this universal sentiment, continued from age to age, and from generation to generation, until, in the “fulness of time,” the Lord Jesus came, the Messiah of God, the Saviour promised from the beginning of the world. He came to preach His Gospel to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.”³ He sent His Apostles to do the same ; and it was not until the Jews rejected it, and would not believe, that He suffered them to proclaim the glad tidings of great joy to the Gentiles. Instead of the sacrament of circumcision,⁴ the mode of entrance into the Jewish Church, the Saviour instituted Baptism, as the sacrament by which all mankind are to be brought into a covenant state with Him. If, now, any change was to be made in the persons, or classes of persons, required to be baptized, it ought to have been, and no doubt would have been, expressly mentioned ; if, as some few in these latter days say, only adults, or those of sufficient age to understand the

1) Gen. xvii. 10.

3) Matt. xv. 24 ; x. 6.

2) Gal. v. 3 ; iii. 10.

4) See Col. ii. 11, 12.

nature and the grounds of the covenant, and to exercise repentance and faith,—if only these were to be baptized, the exclusion of infants would of course be recorded, and the reasons would be set forth. We should be told why infants cannot enter the Church of the Redeemer; on what grounds they are shut out; why parents and children must now be separated; and why the new dispensation of grace is in this one respect, *and this one alone*, more rigid and severe than the former dispensation of the law. Not a word, however, to this effect is any where said—not a syllable is uttered to lead us to suppose that any change has been made; no dissatisfaction is mentioned, no murmurings alluded to, no doubt or question hinted at, as coming from the tenacious Jew. Thousands and thousands became obedient to the faith, and were baptized into Christ's Church; yea, great numbers of them continued to circumcise their children, as had been their wont for ages past. Can any one believe that they quietly acquiesced in the shutting out of their children from the benefits and blessings of the new covenant? Can any believe that the gracious Redeemer, who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," intended this, when He has not uttered a word about it? What a strange condition, too, must have been that of the children of converted Jewish parents! These had been circumcised, and brought into covenant with God, according to the law of Moses; their parents, however acknowledge the Saviour for the Messiah, and are baptized into the new covenant; but what is to be done with the children, if they are not to be baptized? Are they to be brought up as Jews? Nay, Christian parents could not do this. Are they to be left to themselves, as it were neither Jews nor Christians? No, surely; for St. Paul expressly commands them to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Is it *possible*, I ask, that they who one day are capable of entering into covenant with God, are the next utterly deprived of all capacity for the very same act? Who can believe this? What, moreover, are we to think of the infants of those converted Jews, who are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles to have still adhered to

the law?¹ Undoubtedly, the parents circumcised their children; but of what use was it, if they did not also have them baptized? Circumcision could not enter them into the new covenant, and therefore was an unmeaning and absurd ceremony, if their children were shut out from the privileges of the Gospel. Who can believe that the Apostles, in such a state of things, would have said nothing about this extraordinary proceeding on the part of the converted Jews? Who can think, that "whilst they take the greatest pains to set them right on all other points, and even incur their resentment for their faithfulness, they suffer this glaring contradiction between principle and practice to continue without a syllable of disapprobation?"²

It is, therefore, the place of those who call themselves "Baptists," (as if no one else but they understands what Christian Baptism is,) to point out *where* Infant Baptism is *prohibited*, and not call upon us, or expect, to find any express command for it in the New Testament. Under the existing state of things, (as I have shown,) a command of this nature was wholly needless, because every Jew would, of course, bring his children to be baptized, when he himself professed the Christian faith; and the inspired writers would think it entirely unnecessary to mention particularly, in their brief historical notices, what was of every day occurrence, and never for a moment doubted by any one.

II. I have dwelt the longer on this point, my brethren, because I am persuaded that this is the true ground on which the question ought to be placed; and because in this way we shall be enabled to see the futility of the most of the objections urged against Infant Baptism, the main one being the unfitness, or incapacity, of infants for becoming members of the Church of Christ. A knowledge, too, of the sentiments and practice of that day, will fit us to understand aright the sense of our Master's words concerning this and

1) Acts xxi. 18, etc.

2) REV. CHARLES JERRAM, "*Conversations on Infant Baptism*," p. 47, N. Y. 1839.

many other subjects, especially His last command,¹ "Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" where, of course, the Apostles would understand the Lord to mean, that the blessings and privileges, which heretofore had been confined to the Jews and to their infant children, were now to be extended to the people of all nations and their infant children. Such would be the clear sense of the command to those who, as the Apostles, were Jews by birth and education, and were sent to preach the Gospel, first of all, to their own countrymen; and such I think was undoubtedly their practice, as is plainly intimated in the accounts of the "households" baptized: since it is almost impossible to imagine, that among the "households" of the "many myriads of Jews which believed" and were baptized, there were no infant children.²

The Baptism of children, moreover, was no new thing to the Jews in our Saviour's days, because it is a well-established fact, that when proselytes were made to the Jewish religion, they and their children were invariably baptized, previous to the circumcision of the male part of them.³ No

1 The false exposition of these words (Matt. xxviii. 19) hath occasioned that no less dangerous than numerous sect of anabaptists in the world: for the old Latin translation having it, *euntes ergo docete omnes gentes*; hence the German, where anabaptism first began, and all the modern translations, render it as we do, *go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them*. From whence it was supposed by some that were not able to dive into the true meaning of the words, that our Saviour here commanded, that none should be baptized, but such as were first taught the principles of the Christian religion, which is the greatest mistake imaginable; for our Saviour does not speak one word of teaching before Baptism, but only after, ver. 20, *διδασκοντες*, His meaning being only that His Apostles should go about the world, and persuade all nations to forsake their former idolatries and superstitions, and to turn Christians or the disciples of Jesus Christ; and such as were so, should be baptized. And therefore Infant Baptism is so far from being forbidden, that it is *expressly commanded* in these words.—BP. BEVERIDGE, "*Private Thoughts upon a Christian Life*," p. 200.

2) Acts xxi. 20.

3) There were two sorts of proselytes among the Jews; 1st, The proselytes of the gate; and 2d, The proselytes of justice. The former they obliged only to renounce idolatry, and worship God according to the law of nature, which they reduced to seven articles, called by them the seven precepts of the sons of Noah.—Of this sort of proselytes, Naaman the Syrian, and Cornelius the Cen-

command, therefore, was to be expected for the Baptism of infants: "if Baptism itself, and the baptizing of infants (says the very learned Dr. Lightfoot) had been a new thing, and unheard of until John Baptist came, as circumcision was, until God appointed it to Abraham; there would have been, no doubt, as express command for baptizing infants, as there was for circumcising them. But when the baptizing of infants was a thing commonly known and used, as appears from incontestable evidence from their writers, there needed not express assertions that such and such persons were to be the objects of Baptism;" "since therefore it was ordinary, in all ages before, to have infants baptized, if Christ would have had that custom abolished, He would have expressly forbidden it. So that His and the Scripture's silence in this matter, does confirm and establish Infant Baptism for ever."¹

For these reasons, my brethren, the demand of those who ask for express commands on this subject, is unreasonable and improper, as they themselves might and ought to see, from the many things they do and practice, for which no command can be found. They think it right, for instance, that females should be admitted to the Lord's Supper; yet where is there any *command* for it? They deem it their duty to observe the Lord's Day, instead of the Sabbath or Seventh Day; yet where does Scripture *command* this change? They think it proper to observe several customs

tution, are held to have been. The other sort of proselytes, called the proselytes of justice, were such as took on them the observance of the whole Jewish law: for, although the Jews did not hold this necessary for such as were not of their nation, yet they refused none, but gladly received all who would thus profess their religion; and they are remarked, in our Saviour's time, to have been very sedulous to convert all they could hereto (Matt. xxiii. 15): and *when any were thus proselyted to the Jewish religion, they were initiated to it by baptism, sacrifice, and circumcision*, and thenceforth were admitted to all the rites, ceremonies, and privileges that were used by the natural Jews.—DEAN PRIDEAUX'S "*Connexion*," &c., Vol. II. p. 203.

See, also, DR. WALL'S "*History of Infant Baptism*," where this matter is fully discussed.

1) DR. LIGHTFOOT, quoted by DR. WALL, in "*A Conference between two men that had doubts about Infant Baptism*," p. 158, N. Y., 1839.

connected with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, such as making a public profession of faith, using particular garments, changing the time of the supper to morning or noon, using common bread, taking only a morsel of bread and mouthful of wine, &c.; yet who can show, or who pretends to show, any *command* for these? ¹ It would be well, then, for those who profess to stick so closely to the exact institution of the Sacraments, and who think nothing right or proper, unless it be commanded in so many words in Scripture, to reconcile their profession and their practice, in other respects, before they contend so vehemently against Infant Baptism.

I regret that the limits of this discourse do not allow me to enlarge upon the various arguments in favor of Infant Baptism yet unnoticed, or to answer the many objections which ingenious men have devised. It will, however, be my duty, as well as my pleasure, to do this in private, whensoever called upon; and here let me take occasion to entreat that you will on this, and all subjects affecting your eternal well-being, freely, and at all times, consult and advise with your pastor. At present, perhaps, I cannot do better than to sum up the reasons already advanced, trusting that if any of you have doubts on this subject, you will of course endeavor to have them removed, in the way suggested. *First*, Infants are capable of entering into covenant with God, because for ages they did so, on the express command of God Himself; therefore, their inability to exercise repentance and faith is no objection to Infant Baptism, even as it is no objection to infant circumcision, that they could neither understand nor keep the law. *Second*, Infants are nowhere excluded; neither is it said any where, "baptize adult believers only." *Third*, Baptism is expressly commanded for all;—"except one" ² (man, woman, or child) be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," either in this world or in the next: "go, dis-

1) See JERRAM, *ut sup.* p. 9-12.

2) τίς, "Any one, a certain, some one," indef. pron.—PARKHURST's *Lexicon of New Test.*

ciple *all nations*, baptizing them," &c.;—most certainly there is no nation but what is made up, in great part, of infants. *Fourth*, The Christian Jews continued to circumcise their children, which is wholly unaccountable, unless they also had them baptized. *Fifth*, Infant Baptism was a common thing among the Jews; no proselytes or disciples were received without it. *Sixth*, The objection, because there is *no express command*, is absurd, as the opposers of Infant Baptism demonstrate by their own practice in other matters. In addition to these reasons, let it be considered, that nowhere in the Epistles is any direction given for the training children up for Baptism; nothing is said about the age, the qualifications, or any thing else needful for the Baptism of believers' children; a profound silence is observed on this point, while parents are exhorted to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to see that they be taught to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. This omission, on the principles of those who deny Infant Baptism, is most strange and wonderful. Let it be considered, too, that Infant Baptism was the universal practice of the primitive Church, and the Church in all ages; for all branches of the Catholic Church, however wide apart, however differing in language and customs, hold to the practice of Infant Baptism as the truth of God's Word. If, as some few within the last two hundred years have supposed, it is a corruption, it is impossible to tell when it was introduced—not a dissenting voice is to be found in all the records of antiquity. And since, during twelve hundred years or more, nothing else but Infant Baptism was practised, we are reduced to the necessity of supposing, that none of the myriads of holy men and martyrs in all this long period, were members of Christ's Church, and that there was no Baptism, until some one, sixteen or seventeen centuries after the Apostles, began to baptize others, when he himself was unbaptized!

My brethren, I have but a word or two of exhortation to you. See that ye do not deprive your children of the inestimable blessings of the covenant of grace. I know that

there are some who doubt, or who have, perhaps, made up their minds the other way;—let them examine the matter thoroughly, and in the fear of God; let them weigh well what has been laid before you; let them beware how they venture to keep back those whom the Lord Jesus has commanded to be brought to Him; for no man can tell what may be the result of this guilty neglect and presumption on his part: therefore, again I say, beware; and see that ye bring your children to the gracious Redeemer, gladly and willingly, in order that they may be made His children, members of His Church, and heirs of unending bliss; “for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”



Confirmation.

SERMON XXVII.

BAPTISMAL VOWS RATIFIED.

HEB. vi. 2.—“Laying on of hands.”

THE sacred ordinance of Confirmation being about to be administered in this parish,¹ it becomes my duty to direct your special attention to its importance and obligation. In order to a right and due appreciation of its value, we ought to be well assured of the grounds on which our obedience is claimed, and thoroughly persuaded of the benefits and blessings flowing from, or connected with Confirmation; and in order that we may profit by it, and grow in grace and heavenly wisdom, we must search and examine well, whether we estimate, and understand aright, the motives which lead to a proper course in this matter, and the meet preparation of heart required for so solemn an ordinance. It being my earnest desire and endeavor, as you yourselves will testify, to do whatsoever lies in my power towards furthering an end so desirable, and so momentous for the well-being of this parish, I would, at this time, beseech you to give good heed to a plain and succinct statement of these several points:—

FIRST, *The Scriptural Authority for Confirmation.*

SECONDLY, *The Preparation required of those who come to Confirmation.*

THIRDLY, *The Benefits and Blessings flowing from it.*

1) The Right Rev. B. T. ONDERDONK, Bishop of New-York, visited and held Confirmation in St. James's Church, Goshen, N. Y., on Wednesday, July 28th, 1841.

FIRST, *The Scriptural Authority for Confirmation.* The words of St. Paul in the text have been chosen as having a direct bearing on this point. The Apostle had just before been censuring the dulness and culpable ignorance of those to whom he was writing: "Ye are dull of hearing," he says; "when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." However, though this is greatly to be regretted, and ought not so to be, yet inasmuch as we have many things to say, which are of a more exalted character, and require a deeper knowledge of spiritual things, than the rudiments of Christianity, viz. concerning the eternal priesthood of Christ, and such high and holy mysteries, let us, at this time, leave "the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Without dwelling or enlarging upon the strongly implied censure contained in the holy Apostle's language, and passing by for the present, those glorious and ennobling truths and doctrines which he sets forth in the remainder of this Epistle, let me beg you to note, that in the passage just recited he enumerates some of the most important of the first principles of true religion: "Repentance" he begins with, as lying at the foundation, as needful at the very first step towards a holy life; "repentance from dead works," without which we can obtain no pardon, and are exposed to the wrath of God denounced against all sin: "faith toward God" is next presented; since "without faith it is impossible to please Him," impossible to be restored to His favor, impossible to lay hold upon the atonement of Christ, impossible to be saved:—then follows "the doctrine of baptisms," by which expression, though the washings and purifying rites under the law may be alluded to, yet the holy sacrament of Baptism, ordained by Christ, is doubtless specially intended; because, in all ordinary cases, it is made "necessary to salvation"—"he that believeth *and is*

baptized, shall be saved," says our Divine Lord; and none other have the promise, sure and steadfast, on which to build good hope of eternal life:—"laying on of hands," comes immediately after; and may seem, naturally enough, to have reference to that holy sacrament, in and by which we are "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." After these, the Apostle speaks of those fundamental verities, "resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment;" concerning which, no one who names the name of Christ can for a moment entertain a doubt or question.—Here it becomes necessary to observe, in answer to an objection sometimes urged, that "the rank which the 'laying on of hands' holds among the principles of the doctrine of Christ, proves that it refers to Confirmation. Imposition of hands was indeed employed in conveying the ministerial authority; and by the same ceremony the sick were healed, and pious and holy men invoked blessings on the objects of their regard. These acts, however, cannot be denoted by the laying on of hands to which the Apostle refers, which being stated as a principle of the doctrine of Christ must refer to *all* Christians. But these acts related not to all Christians; only to the *ministry*, who, by 'laying on of (the Bishop's) hands,' received the ministerial authority; to the *sick*, who by this rite were healed; or to the *individuals* on whom, by this ceremony, pious men invoked blessings. These acts, therefore, of the imposition of hands, could not be ranked among the principles of the doctrine of Christ, in the same station with 'repentance,' with 'faith,' (with 'baptism,') with the 'resurrection from the dead,' with a 'judgment' to come. We must, therefore, refer this appellation to that rite which universally prevailed in the primitive Church, and which is known in modern times by the name of Confirmation."¹

Thus, as is sufficiently evident, this ordinance is declared to be among the first principles of our holy religion. True, it is not to be exalted to an *equality* with the holy sacra-

1) BP. HOBART, "*Candidate for Confirmation Instructed*," p. 5.

ments, ordained by Christ, as means whereby we receive grace and heavenly benediction. True, it is not to be ranked as of the *same* moment with repentance and faith, with the resurrection of the body, and eternal judgment at the last day ; for in this case it would be included in the creed of the Catholic Church : yet it is none the less to be valued on this account ; its *real* importance is in no wise lessened ; St. Paul places it in a position which compels us to reverence it highly, and to esteem it as very meet and becoming in the Church. And we know, too, that many years before the Epistle to the Hebrews was written,¹ the “laying on of hands” was practised by the Apostles, acting under inspiration. Turn to the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and you will have a striking commentary on the passage selected as our text. The martyrdom of Stephen, which had just before taken place, seems to have been the signal for a sharp and bitter persecution. It fell first upon “the Church which was at Jerusalem,” and calling forth the zeal and energy of Saul, caused a dispersion of the faithful “throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.” Among those “scattered abroad, who went every where preaching the Word,” particular mention is made of Philip, the deacon, who “went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” Previously, they had been deluded by a crafty impostor, named Simon, who had succeeded in bewitching the people of Samaria with sorceries and magic arts ; “but when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.” Simon Magus, also, professing to believe, was baptized by Philip. “Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John ; who, when they

1) The events recorded in the 8th chapter of the Acts occurred A. D. 33 or 34 ; the Epistle to the Hebrews, according to the best authority, was written A. D. 64.

were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; (for, as yet, He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) THEN LAID THEY THEIR HANDS ON THEM, and they received the Holy Ghost."

The facts here recorded deserve particular notice. Philip, whose ordination to the diaconate had just before been stated, was, by the blessing of God, the means of converting to the faith of Christ the people of Samaria. On profession of their faith, he baptized them; thus initiating them into the fellowship of the saints of God. Now, what followed seems very remarkable, unless we suppose Confirmation to be of great value and significance. The Samaritans had repented; they believed in Christ; they were baptized into His holy Church; what more was required? In the judgment of the Apostles, something was lacking in order to fulfil all righteousness; for, as soon as they heard what Philip had done, they sent Peter and John on a special mission to Samaria. These, when they came, were not content with testifying and preaching the Gospel; they did not seek, by their presence as well as their words, simply to strengthen the faith and animate the hopes of the Samaritan Christians: nay; for they were sent with a different, or, rather, additional object in view; since we learn, that they assembled the baptized converts, prayed for them by virtue of their office, LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM, and they received the Holy Ghost. On what ground, therefore, Confirmation can be by any lightly esteemed, I profess myself unable to comprehend.¹ There is another instance of the "laying on

1) The Spirit of God comes which way He pleases, but we are tied to use His own economy, and expect the blessings appointed, by His own ministries; and because to prayer is promised we shall receive whatever we ask, we may as well omit the receiving the Holy Eucharist, pretending that prayer alone will procure the blessings expected in the other,—as well, I say, as omit Confirmation, because we hope to be strengthened and receive virtue from on high by the use of the Supper of the Lord. * * * But the principal thing is this: Confirmation is the consummation and perfection, the corroboration and strength, of Baptism and baptismal grace; for in Baptism we undertake to do our duty, but in Confirmation we receive strength to do it; in Baptism others promise for us, in Confirmation we undertake for ourselves, we ease our godfathers and god-

of hands," recorded in the first six verses of the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles ; to which, however, I shall now only refer you, in order that you may make it the subject of private examination.

Here I should leave the Scriptural authority for Confirmation as sufficiently discussed and drawn out, were it not that a plausible objection may be started, which is, that the receiving of the Holy Ghost in consequence of, or through, the laying on of the Apostles' hands, refers simply and solely to *miraculous* gifts and powers ; wherefore, it is urged, the Apostles' example affords no good ground for the laying on of hands, by the bishops of the Church, seeing that miracles have long since ceased. But the objection is more plausible than sound.¹ Generally, it is acknowledged, the Holy Ghost, in His miraculous powers and influences, as was meet and needful in the first propagation of the Gospel, was conferred by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles ; yet there is no reason whatever to conclude that this was always the case. Nay, when we consider the vast multitudes of Christian converts, and when we remember

mothers of their burden, and take it upon our shoulders, together with the advantage of the prayers of the bishop and all the Church, made then in our behalf ; in Baptism we give up our names to Christ, but in Confirmation we put our seal to the profession, and God puts His seal to the promise.—BP. JEREMY TAYLOR's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 25.

1) It may be said, that those gifts of the Spirit, with which the imposition of the Apostles' hands was usually attended, differed extremely from any imparted now. Thus much is expressly affirmed of the disciples at Ephesus ; and with great probability believed of the other instances. Since then the miraculous powers anciently communicated by this rite, have long ago ceased ; why should not the practice itself cease, or what effect can we ever expect from it ? Now it is to be considered, on the other hand, that by the Holy Ghost in Scripture are to be understood, not only the several powers distributed in the primitive Church for working miracles, but every sort of grace and assistance, attributed to this Spirit as the Author of sanctification to mankind. Allowing, therefore, that the first Christians were, at "laying on of hands," endued with such extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, as God thought fit then to do honor to this religion by ; yet even thus the rite may, and still does, very reasonably continue, for the actual conferring such other valuable and necessary benefits as Christians in every age are encouraged to pray for, and depend upon by virtue of the same Spirit. And these, by way of distinction from the former, are usually styled the *common* and *ordinary* graces of the Spirit.—DEAN STANHOPE, *On the Epistles and Gospels*, Vol. III. p. 137, Lond. Ed. 1751.

that St. Paul says expressly, that *all* did not speak with tongues, nor *all* work miracles,¹ though, beyond doubt, I think, *all* were confirmed, what force is there in the objection just stated? Moreover, it must not be lost sight of, that "laying on of hands" is a first principle of the Christian religion, and that the gifts and graces of the Spirit which we term ordinary, in contradistinction to the miraculous, are of infinite and essential importance to the Church in all ages: yea, "to cast out the devil of lust, or to throw down the pride of Lucifer, to beat down Satan under our feet, or to triumph over our spiritual enemies, to cure a diseased soul, or to keep unharmed from temptation, or the infection of an ill example, is much more advantageous and beneficial to us than the power of working the greatest miracles."²

SECONDLY, The Scriptural authority for Confirmation being duly weighed and digested, we are properly fitted to examine *the preparation required of the candidates for this sacred ordinance*. By turning to the Office for the Baptism of Infants, we find, at its close, this exhortation made to the godfathers and godmothers:—"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose." To the same intent is the rubric at the end of the Office for the Baptism of those of Riper Years, who have just professed to "believe all the articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' creed," and have determined "by God's help obediently to keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their lives:"—"It is expedient that every person thus baptized should be confirmed by the Bishop, so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be, that so he may be admitted to the Holy Communion." The rubrics, also, at the end of the Catechism, and the Preface to the Confirmation service, hold

1) 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30.

2) REV. CHARLES WHEATLEY, *On the Common Prayer*, p. 410, Am. Ed. 1837.

the same language; it being expressly declared in the rubric at the end of the "Order of Confirmation," that "there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

Thus you see, my brethren, what is the preparation expected at your hands by the Church: it is the preparation of the mind and of the heart; it is such meetness as becomes those who have arrived at "the years of discretion, and have learned what their sponsors promised for them in Baptism; in order that they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm their baptismal vows; and may also promise that, by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavor themselves faithfully to observe such things as they by their own confession have assented unto."¹ There is demanded a genuine and hearty repentance for all our sins past; a true and lively faith in the alone merits of our crucified Redeemer; and a steadfast purpose evermore to live holy and consistent lives. Knowing what we are by nature, and realizing what we have been made by grace, we shall seek to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."² Sadly deficient will our preparation be, if we have not an humble and heart-felt sense of our weakness, proneness to sin, and inability to help ourselves; and if we trust not in the might of Him, who is both able and willing to save, and who gives His Holy Spirit to every one who asks for Him. Daily must our prayers ascend for the enlightening influences of the Spirit of Christ; daily, with faithful prayer, must we search into the Divine Oracles, which are able to make us wise unto salvation; daily must we be growing in grace, by striving to raise our minds to high and heavenly things, by endeavoring to think those things that are good, by shunning the vain amusements and frivolities of the world, by seeking the society and intercourse of the wise, and prudent, and holy, by never

forsaking to assemble ourselves in the house of God, to pray and praise, with our brethren in Christ, and by showing forth, at all times, in our lives, consistent piety and godliness of deportment.¹

It is true, that the standard of preparation here set up is high, nay, very high; it is true, that in no part of the Christian life can more be required of the members of Christ's body; and perhaps some may hence be discouraged, not feeling in themselves that they have attained unto such holiness of heart and life; yet, be assured, my brethren, it were dangerous to allow your minds to dwell upon any standard less high; and sure I am, that if you have thoroughly learned and digested the Catechism of the Church; if you are duly sensible of the obligation of your baptismal vows and promises; and if you remember that the Church expects every one who is prepared for Confirmation, to be also in a meet state for the Holy Communion, you will not, you cannot deem that any preparation short of this will suffice. While, however, I would urge upon you, as I now do, never to slack your exertions, never to remit your prayers, or the daily reading and studying God's holy Word, or the daily endeavor to carry out the principles of the Gospel into the every day concerns of life; I would, nevertheless, speak a

1) They who come forward to Confirmation are expected by the Church to do it with a full view of the nature of the obligations which were undertaken for them at Baptism, with the serious purpose of fulfilling those obligations, and with characters and lives consistent with faithful devotion to the performance of that purpose. Perfection is of course not looked for. Nor ought a very high degree of maturity in the Divine life, however desirable, to be made an essential qualification for any means of grace: for the object of every such means is to help the Christian onward to higher advances in godly living. But we must and do expect seriousness, sincerity, and holy desires, resolutions, and endeavors to detract nothing from the full measure of Christian requirement; and all with humble dependence on God's grace for ability, and practical acknowledgment of the duty of seeking that grace, and duly profiting by it, and looking in true faith for the acceptance of our services only through the merits of Christ. We must and do expect, my beloved friends, who purpose offering yourselves for Confirmation, that you come to so holy an ordinance, engaging you in so momentous a transaction, and laying you under such solemn obligations, as they should be expected to come who have arrived at years of discretion, and are consequently capable of exercising upon it a sound judgment and enlightened sensibilities.—Br. B. T. ONDERDONK, "*Sermon on Confirmation*," p. 11; 1842.

word of comfort and encouragement to all, into whose hearts God has put it, to desire to come to Confirmation. If there be the "honest and good heart,"¹ of which the Saviour speaks in the parable—if there be a sincere and upright determination, by God's grace, to do the will of your Father in heaven—if there be a conscientious abstaining from evil, and following hard after good; then let me say unto you, come without fear and without hesitation; come in faith to this sacred ordinance, and doubt not, that God will "daily increase in you His Holy Spirit more and more, until you come unto His everlasting kingdom."

THIRDLY, I shall not, at present, enlarge upon the various *benefits and blessings flowing from or connected with Confirmation*, since time will allow me to point you to but a few of them. If you have come in penitence and faith, the benefit will be great to yourselves and to the Church; you will make it evident to all, that you have freely and voluntarily taken upon yourselves the vows and promises made in your name, when, by reason of your tender age, you could not declare your assent;² you will prove to all,

1) Luke viii. 15.

2) Sometimes the cause of severing Confirmation from Baptism was, in the parties that received Baptism being infants, at which age they might be very well admitted to live in the family; but because to fight in the army of God, to discharge the duties of a Christian man, to bring forth the fruits and to do the works of the Holy Ghost, their time of ability was not yet come, (so that Baptism were not deferred,) there could, by stay of their Confirmation, no harm ensue, but rather good. For by this means it came to pass that children in expectation thereof were seasoned with the principles of true religion, before malice and corrupt examples depraved their minds; a good foundation was laid betimes for the direction of the course of their whole lives; the seed of the Church of God was preserved sincere and sound; the prelates and fathers of God's family to whom the care of their souls belonged, saw by trial and examination of them a part of their own heavy burden discharged, reaped comfort by beholding the first beginnings of true godliness in tender years, glorified Him whose praise they found in the mouths of infants, and neglected not so fit an opportunity of giving every one fatherly encouragement and exhortation. Whereunto imposition of hands, and prayer being added, our warrant for the great good effect thereof, is the same which Patriarchs, Prophets, Priests, Apostles, Fathers, and men of God have had for such, their particular invocations and benedictions, as no man, I suppose, professing truth of religion, will easily think to have been without fruit. No, there is no cause we should doubt of the benefit, but surely great cause to make complaint of the deep neglect of this Christian duty, almost with

enemies as well as friends, that you are enlisted under the banner of Christ, and are determined to fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil; you will feel that you are putting on the armor of light, and that you stand forth, in the presence of the world, the acknowledged disciples of the Lord Jesus; and you will thank God and take courage, because He has strengthened you, and enabled you to rise above the selfish indolence and procrastination of your nature, far above the affected pity, or scorn, or contempt, of the worldly-minded and the profane; and made you to stand in the good old paths of your fathers, and of holy men in all ages, with your faces set steadily toward the heavenly Jerusalem. Be assured, that God will withhold none of the benefits and blessings of the covenant from you; for His promises are ever sure and steadfast. Ratifying, honestly and sincerely, your baptismal engagements, you will, by the laying on of Apostolic hands, be certified of the favor and gracious goodness of God toward you; His Fatherly hand will ever be over you; His Holy Spirit will ever be with you; and will so lead you in the knowledge and obedience of His Word, that in the end you shall obtain everlasting life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Ye shall be blessed above all language to express, if ye abide faithful unto the end; but only on this condition; since "without faith it is *impossible* to please God;" but if ye are truly penitent and believing, "though you should come in weakness, and fear, and much trembling, you shall go away strengthened and comforted; your Baptism shall be re-blest to you; more grace shall be given unto you; you shall be sealed anew with the Holy Ghost from heaven; the blessed Supper of the Lord, which is already spread before you, will be a rich and delicious feast to your souls; you shall hunger and thirst for it; necessity will be laid upon you to approach towards it, and you will beg even for the crumbs which fall from your Divine Master's table."¹

all them to whom by right of their place and calling the same belongeth.—
HOOKER's *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. ch. lxvi. § 7.

1) BP. MEADE, "*Candidate for Confirmation Self-examined*," p. 15.

Now, if such be the blessings promised to those who seek to fulfil all righteousness, need I urge upon you, who have not been confirmed, to embrace the present opportunity? Need I say to you that it is your duty, and required of you by the reverence and love which you feel, or ought to feel, for Christ's holy Church? Need I repeat again, that this sacred ordinance has been in use "always, every where, and by all," i. e. in every branch, and throughout the "one Catholic and Apostolic Church?" I trust not, my brethren: I have good hope that you will prepare now, while you may, and that you will not put it off in the delusive expectation of a more convenient season; for that season may never come; death may suddenly lay his cold hand upon you, and the silent grave may be your resting place, ere another call of this kind be made upon you; now, and now only, is the accepted time—even now is the day of salvation. And to you who have resolved, in the fear of God, to present yourselves for Confirmation, let me say, as I do from the depth of my heart,—go on; go on in the good way which you have begun. The prayers and invocations of the Lord's chief minister will be answered; and you will, if you be meetly prepared, if your penitence be genuine, your faith true and lively, and your obedience hearty and sincere, you will be blessed both outwardly in your bodies, and inwardly in your souls; and when you come to lie down on the bed of death, you will rejoice and be thankful, that your choice was thus made in the morning of life, or at the noontide, or in the evening of your days; yea, you will then see abundant cause for humble thanksgiving, that you have trusted in that gracious Saviour, who gives His Holy Spirit to all who ask aright for Him; and you will go home to our Father's house, and rejoice in Him for ever and ever.

The Lord's Supper.

SERMON XXVIII.

THE EUCHARISTIC FEAST.

1 COR. xi. 26.—“As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.”

THE Church of God in Corinth seems very early to have fallen into disorderly and unbecoming sentiments and practices; for, though only a few years had elapsed from the time of St. Paul's preaching and residence in that city, yet, as may be gathered from the two Epistles which he wrote, the Corinthian converts had listened to the persuasions of factious teachers; had become divided into sects or parties; had in measure lost sight of the grand principle of unity and unanimity, in subjection to the great Head of the Church; and had consequently given way to feelings and practices utterly unworthy of the Gospel of Christ. The Apostle very fully discusses the points which he deemed it necessary to notice; and he both lays down the law, which is applicable in all similar cases, and shows its application to the particular case before him. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and their misapprehension and perversion of it, are distinctly treated of in the chapter from which the text is taken: hence, very properly, is our attention claimed on this solemn occasion, when we are invited to the same heavenly feast. Having spoken, in the former part of this chapter, of the proper deportment of males and females in their assemblies for public worship, he spends the last

eighteen verses in reproving their improper feelings and actions, and in setting forth the spirit and design of this sacrament, as shown in the original institution by the Lord Jesus. "When ye come together for public worship (he says) it is in such a way that it is not for the better, but for the worse, seeing that there are schisms, or divisions and dissensions among you: you do not, therefore, properly celebrate the Lord's Supper; for in your agapæ, or feast of charity, which accompanies the sacrament, every one who is rich, sitting down to eat what he has brought, in company with his own friends or party, without regarding others, the poor being excluded, are consequently sent home hungry, while the rich are filled to satiety. What! (says St. Paul) have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? if ye desire to feast yourselves, and make choice of your guests, cannot ye do it at home, in your own houses? Why do ye defile the Church of God with these partial and immoderate banquets? why do ye despise and shame the poor, who have not wherewith to feast with you? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

The Apostle then goes on to declare, what he had received by special revelation from the Lord, and what he had before, in substance, and at large, delivered unto the Corinthians, viz., "that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament, or covenant, in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." Now (continues the Apostle, in the words of the text) as often as ye eat this bread, the consecrated symbol of the broken body of Christ, and as often as ye drink this cup, the consecrated emblem of the blood poured out on the cross for your redemption, ye do show, or openly publish to the world, the Lord's death and passion: and not only is this to be done once or twice, not only in one or two ages, not only by one branch of the Catholic Church,

but also continually, in every age, and by every portion of the universal Church; for in and by this holy sacrament we discharge our bounden duty, which is to commemorate the Lord's death and atoning sacrifice, until the end of time, when He shall come again in power and great glory. Wherefore, let a man so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, that he do it not in an unworthy manner, and subject himself to condemnation and punishment, not discerning the Lord's body."¹

Here, my brethren, with this brief outline, it may be thought that the subject might safely be left to the serious reflection of all Christian people; yet, inasmuch as great misapprehension prevails respecting the nature, obligation,

1) "The Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper;" words intended to show, that our Church as truly believes the strongest assertions of Scripture concerning this sacrament, as the Church of Rome doth; only takes more care to understand them in their right meaning: which is, that though in one sense, all communicants equally partake of what Christ calls His Body and Blood, that is, the outward signs of them; yet in a much more important sense, the faithful only, the pious and virtuous receiver, eats His flesh and drinks His blood; shares in the life and strength derived to men from His incarnation and death: and through faith in Him becomes, by a vital union, one with Him; a "member," as St. Paul expresses it, "of His flesh and of His bones." (Eph. v. 30.)—In appearance, the sacrament of Christ's death is given to all alike; but "verily and indeed," in its beneficial effects, to none besides the faithful. Even to the unworthy communicant He is present, as He is wherever we meet together in His name: but in a better and most gracious sense to the worthy soul; becoming by the inward virtue of His Spirit, its food and sustenance. *This real presence of Christ in the sacrament, His Church hath always believed.* But the monstrous notion of His bodily presence was started seven hundred years after His death; and arose chiefly from the indiscretion of preachers and writers of warm imaginations, who instead of explaining judiciously the lofty figures of Scripture language heightened them, and went beyond them; till both it and they had their meaning mistaken most astonishingly. And when once an opinion had taken root, that seemed to exalt the holy sacrament so much, it easily grew and spread: and the more, for its wonderful absurdity, in those ignorant and superstitious ages: till at length, five hundred years ago, and twelve hundred years after our Saviour's birth, it was established for a Gospel truth by the pretended authority of the Romish Church. And even this had been tolerable in comparison, if they had not added idolatrous practice to erroneous belief; worshipping, on their knees, a bit of bread for the Son of God. Nor are they content to do this themselves, but with most unchristian cruelty, curse and murder those who refuse it.—APP. SECKER, *On the Catechism*, p. 312.

and intent of this holy sacrament, it is no more than a part of my duty to do what in me lies, to remove misapprehension, and to present the Lord's Supper in its true light, as a special mean of grace and comfort to all who are truly penitent and believing.

FIRST.—Following the guidance of the Church in her Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies, let us seek to ascertain *the purport of this Sacrament*, as it affects us and every member of the body of Christ. A sacrament, it will be borne in mind, is defined in our Catechism to be “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us; ordained by Christ Himself; as a means whereby we receive the same, (i. e. the inward and spiritual grace,) and a pledge to assure us thereof:” or, in the words of Article XXV., “Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.” According to this definition it is evident that there are but two sacraments, viz., Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord; both of which are declared to be “generally (that is, in all cases, where they may be had) necessary to salvation.” The sacrament of the Lord's Supper has its outward and visible sign, viz., bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received; the inward part or thing signified, is the Body and Blood of Christ, which are spiritually, or verily and indeed, taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

Now, I think it is plain that this “sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death,” (as our Article XXVIII styles it,) was instituted by the Redeemer for a special purpose. He meant that it should answer a particular end; and He bound it upon His ministering servants and His professed disciples, faithfully to observe it until His coming again. We cannot, for a moment, suppose that the significant actions, the express injunctions, and the affectionate exhortations of our Lord and Master may be unheeded; nay

when it is remembered that the night in which He was betrayed was the solemn season of the passover, and that He, the true paschal Lamb, in a few short hours, was to be slain, and to take away the sins of the world, how full of meaning are His actions, how deeply pathetic are His words! He took bread, that nutritious substance, not only absolutely needful to life, but also imparting strength and vigor to the body of man; He gave thanks, blessing and consecrating this bread for all ages and for all people, as the symbol of the precious "bread which came down from heaven," even Himself, the Divine Saviour; He brake it; He gave it to His disciples; He said, Take, eat, this is my body, shortly to be broken for you and for all on the cross: likewise He took the cup, containing wine, which refreshes and cheers, and animates to exertion; He gave thanks, blessing and consecrating this wine as the symbol of His blood soon to be shed for many for the remission of sins; He gave the cup to them; He said, Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new covenant: and in respect to both eating the bread and drinking the wine, His command, twice repeated, was, Do this in remembrance of me.¹ In this

1) If we doubt what those admirable words may import, let him be our teacher for the meaning of Christ to whom Christ was Himself a schoolmaster; let our Lord's Apostle be His interpreter; content we ourselves with His explication, "my body," *the communion of my body*, "my blood," *the communion of my blood*. Is there any thing more expedite, clear and easy than that as Christ is termed our life, because through Him we obtain life, so the parts of this sacrament are His body and blood, for that they are so to us who receiving them receive that by them which they are termed? The bread and cup are His body and blood, because they are causes instrumental upon the receipt whereof the *participation* of His body and blood ensueth. For that which produceth any certain effect is not vainly nor improperly said to be that very effect whereunto it tendeth. Every cause is in the effect which groweth from it. Our souls and bodies quickened to eternal life are effects the cause whereof is the Person of Christ; His body and blood are the true well-spring out of which this life floweth. So that His body and blood are in that very subject whereunto they minister life, not only by effect or operation, even as the influence of the heavens is in plants, beasts, men, and in every thing which they quicken, but also by a far more divine and mystical kind of union, which maketh us one with Him, even as He and the Father are one. *The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the Sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the Sacrament.*—HOOKER'S *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. Ch. lxvii. § 5

manner, too, (says the Apostle, speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost,) show forth unto all men the Lord's death till His coming again.

Very evident, then, seems to be the purport of this holy sacrament. It was ordained by Christ Himself, and so is a divinely appointed mean of grace and comfort; being appointed by Him, it is a pledge of the sure fulfilment of His promises; and it is certain that they who eat and drink these consecrated symbols, in penitence and faith, do feed on the Body and Blood of Christ in their souls, do receive spiritual sustenance by special supplies of grace, and do have their faith in Christ not only quickened, but also strengthened and confirmed. In the words of our Homily, "thus (in this celestial banquet and feast) the faithful see, hear and know the favorable mercies of God sealed, the satisfaction by Christ toward us confirmed, and the remission of sin established. Here they may feel wrought the tranquillity of conscience, the increase of faith, the strengthening of hope, the large spreading abroad of brotherly kindness, with many other sundry graces of God. The taste whereof they cannot attain unto, who be drowned in the deep lake of blindness, ignorance," and sin.¹ Yea, we are continually reminded of the death of Christ, and His atoning sacrifice on the cross; we are constantly assured, that except He had come in the flesh, and died in our stead, we should be helpless and miserable for ever; and we are most movingly exhorted to a thankful remembrance of His death, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.²

1) HOMILY of the worthy receiving and reverent esteeming of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, p. 378.

2) What a clear representation is here, of the great work of our redemption! How is my Saviour, by all my senses, here brought home to my soul! How is His passion lively acted before mine eyes! for lo, my bodily eye doth not more truly see bread and wine than the eye of my faith sees the body and blood of my Redeemer: thus was His sacred body torn and broken; thus was His precious blood poured out for me. My sins, wretched man that I am! helped thus to crucify my Saviour; and for the discharge of my sins, would He be thus crucified. Neither did He only give Himself for me upon the cross; but lo, He both offers and gives Himself to me in this His blessed institution.—BP. HALL, "*The Devout Soul*," ch. iv. § 3.

SECONDLY.—There is yet another point which it is necessary to insist upon, with special reference to the manner in which this holy sacrament is regarded by too many in the present age; and that is, *the imperative obligation resting upon us all to receive it in penitence and faith*. You know, my brethren,—alas, that I should be compelled to say it!—that it is very common indeed for the great majority in every parish, some from one cause, some from another, to turn their backs upon the Lord's Supper, and regularly and constantly to refuse to obey the dying command of their Master; and you may know, too, that in this parish not one third of the adult members are communicants; yes, and of the forty communicants registered, but six are males: now let me assure you most solemnly, that common sentiment and common practice on this subject, do not, by any means, make the sentiment and the practice to be right; the multitude of those who do wrong, though here it may keep men in countenance, and satisfy the reproaches of conscience, yet will prove no sort of excuse or palliation at the bar of God, for any individual who has the opportunity of knowing and doing right, as *you* unquestionably have.

Let me assure you, moreover, that the Lord's Supper is declared by the Gospel, and the Church, the Gospel's interpreter, to be *necessary to salvation in every case where it may be had*. St. Paul, in the tenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, though not treating expressly or directly of this subject, adduces the Lord's Supper, as an illustration admirably adapted to his purpose, employing the following language:—"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" that is to say, in other words, is not the Lord's Supper the divinely instituted mean whereby we have the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, or have communicated to us the beneficial effects procured by the broken body and shed blood of Christ? Is not this the appointed way, in which we are both permitted and commanded to seek our full share in the redemption wrought out by Christ, and in the gifts and

graces of the Holy Ghost? Is not this what the Lord's disciples are to do, in order to show unto all men that they are members of the "one body" of Christ?¹ The interrogative form adopted by the Apostle renders his assertion as strong as it can possibly be made.

If now we turn to the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, and read attentively the discourse of our Saviour, from the twenty-sixth verse onward, we shall find, I think, our obligation in this matter rendered clear beyond all contradiction. We shall see how positively the Saviour declares Himself to be the only bread on which the soul can feed, and derive sustenance; how fully and explicitly He makes it needful for all to partake of His atoning sacrifice by faith; and how aptly and properly (though not indeed primarily) His declarations apply to the holy sacrament of His Body and Blood. "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for

1) Thus much we must be sure to hold, that in the Supper of the Lord there is no vain ceremony, no untrue figure of a thing absent; but, as the Scripture saith, "the table of the Lord, the Bread and Cup of the Lord, the memory of Christ, the Annunciation of His death, yea, the Communion of the Body and the Blood of the Lord, in a marvellous incorporation, which by the operation of the Holy Ghost, (the very bond of our conjunction with Christ,) is through faith wrought into the souls of the faithful, whereby not only their souls live to eternal life, but they surely trust to win their bodies a resurrection to immortality." The true understanding of this fruition and union, which is betwixt *the body and the Head*, betwixt the true believers and Christ, the ancient Catholic Fathers, both perceiving themselves and commending to their people, were not afraid to call this Supper, some of them, "the salve of immortality, and sovereign preservative against death;" other, "a deific communion;" other, "the sweet dainties of our Saviour, the pledge of eternal health, the defence of faith, the hope of the resurrection;" other, "the food of immortality, the healthful grace, and the conservatory to everlasting life." All which sayings, both of the holy Scripture and godly men, truly attributed to this celestial banquet and feast, if we would often call to mind, O how would they inflame our hearts to desire the participation of these mysteries, and oftentimes to covet after this bread, continually to thirst for this food! Not as especially regarding the terrene and earthly creatures which remain; but always holding fast and cleaving by faith to the Rock, whence we may suck the sweetness of everlasting salvation.—*HOMILY on the Sacrament*, p. 378.

ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.”¹ Stronger language could not be used, more forcible terms could not be employed; so that it seems clear that Holy Scripture leaves us in no doubt as to the obligation which is laid upon every baptized member of Christ’s Church, to come to the Lord’s table, and participate in the benefits and blessings there conveyed to the faithful and obedient.

And the Church bears testimony to the same effect. She bids us in the name of God, she calls upon us in Christ’s behalf, she exhorts us, *as we love our own salvation*, to be partakers of the Holy Communion; she teaches us to pray that “we may so eat the flesh of God’s dear Son, and drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean

1) “I am the bread of life,” &c.; and again, “He that eats my flesh,” &c.;—the plain consequent of which words is this, that, therefore, this eating and drinking Christ’s flesh and blood can only be done by the ministries of life and of the Spirit, which is opposed to nature, and flesh, and death. And when we consider, that he who is not a spiritual and holy person does not feed upon Christ, who brings life eternal to them that feed on Him,—it is apparent that our manducation must be spiritual, and therefore so must the food; and consequently it cannot be natural flesh, however altered in circumstances and visibilities, and impossible or incredible changes. For it is not in this spiritual food, as it was in Manna, of which our fathers did eat and died; but whosoever eats this Divine nutriment, shall never die. The sacraments, indeed, and symbols, the exterior part and ministries, may be taken unto condemnation, but the food itself never. For an unworthy person cannot feed on this food, because here to eat Christ’s flesh is to do our duty and to be established in our title to the possession of the eternal promises.—It is strange that Christians should pertinaciously insist upon carnal significations and natural effects in sacraments and mysteries, when our blessed Lord hath given us a sufficient light to conduct and secure us from such misapprehensions;—“the flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life;” that is, the flesh is corruption, and its senses are ministers of death: and this one word alone was perpetually sufficient for Christ’s disciples.—BP. JEREMY TAYLOR’S *Works*, Vol. III. p. 861.

by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us ;” she declares, “ that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the Lord’s Supper, the bread broken is a partaking of the Body of Christ, and the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ ;”¹ and in her Catechism she plainly teaches that this sacrament, equally with that of Baptism, is “ generally necessary to salvation,” i. e., in all ordinary cases, where this sacrament may be had, it is necessary to be partakers of it : it is necessary, first and above all, because the Saviour has commanded it ; it is necessary, because He has appointed that special blessings shall flow through this channel to the faithful recipient ; it is necessary, because here, in and through it, we obtain the largest measures of ghostly strength to resist temptation, striving against sin ; and because here alone we can see most vividly the exceeding enormity of sin, and the wondrous love and compassion of the Redeemer, who has triumphed over sin, Satan, and death ;—all which is so clearly, forcibly, and eloquently set forth in the Communion service, that I must beg you to read and study it with care and attention.

My brethren, you have now, in what has been said, the distinct announcement which I feel it my duty to make respecting the holy sacrament of the Lord’s Supper ; and I call upon you, especially those who have heretofore kept back from the table of the Lord, to examine it well, to consider it seriously and solemnly, as ye value your salvation. This command comes to you not on the authority of man, but on the authority of God ; the Lord’s Supper, in its obligation, and unspeakable value and importance, is not proposed to you as a matter of inference from doubtful language, but as a plain and positive precept, binding on every one who names the name of Christ ; and if you desire or intend to do your duty, you have no choice in the matter ; if you mean, by God’s grace, to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, you cannot any longer refuse to come to

this heavenly feast; if you have aught of a desire to emulate in good works the first Christians, you will call to mind what a privilege they esteemed it to participate in these holy mysteries, and how gladly they assembled every Lord's day to receive the pledges of His love, to their great and endless comfort.

Be well assured, then, that the way of duty is plain before you, and that you are safe in no other way, but in the way of duty; be well assured, that if you continue to refuse, if you persist in excusing yourselves because you have bought a farm, or would try your yokes of oxen, or have married a wife, you will not be excused by God; your ingratitude will be so great that you will be counted unworthy of the heavenly feast." Wherefore, (in the language of the Exhortation to the Communion,) according to mine office, I bid you in the name of God, I call you in Christ's behalf, I exhort you, as ye love your own salvation, that ye will be partakers of this Holy Communion. And as the Son of God did vouchsafe to yield up His soul by death upon the cross, for your salvation; so it is your duty to receive the Communion in remembrance of the sacrifice of His death, as He Himself has commanded: which if ye shall neglect to do, consider with yourselves, how great is your ingratitude to God, and how sore punishment hangeth over your heads for the same, when ye wilfully abstain from the Lord's table, and separate from your brethren who come to feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food. These things if ye earnestly consider, ye will, by God's grace, return to a better mind; for the obtaining whereof we shall not cease to make our humble petitions to Almighty God, our heavenly Father."

The Lord's Supper.

SERMON XXIX.

THE BLESSED PRIVILEGES OF HOLY COMMUNION.

ST. LUKE xxii. 19.—“ This do in remembrance of me.”

It was the holy season of the passover; the annual commemoration of that fearful night when the Lord God smote the first-born of every family throughout the land of Egypt, from the king on his throne unto the beggar in the dungeon, while he spared alive the children of Israel. A company, few in number, were assembled in “a large upper room,” and obediently keeping the command of God by the mouth of Moses, His servant. The paschal supper was ready, the guests were gathered round, and the Master spake as never man spake: “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise, also, the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” He was no ordinary speaker whose voice uttered these words: they were far from insignificant persons whom He addressed;

and though more than eighteen hundred years have elapsed since that most interesting night—though the house and the room have mouldered into dust, and the guests have all gone to their long home; yet the same voice of the never-dying, glorified Lord and Master, has been speaking, age after age, to myriads and myriads of His people. He has spread the same banquet of heavenly food; He has invited to the same feast multitudes hungering and thirsting after righteousness; He has shed abroad by this same rich and precious mean, the abundant gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; not only upon His Apostles, and prophets, and martyrs, and holy men, in the first and brightest days of the Church, but also upon the saints, of *all* ages, *all* climes, *all* people. And this very day He speaks from heaven to us, as distinctly as though our bodily eyes beheld Him, and our ears listened to His gracious command: “this do in remembrance of me.” It is very meet, therefore, as well as our bounden duty, that we who have again, in God’s mercy, been permitted to assemble in His house; we, who are again urged and entreated, as we love our own salvation, to hear while we may, to come while we can, should reverently ask,

I. *Lord, what are we to do?* and,

II. *For what purpose are we to do thus?*

O do Thou, who dwellest between the Cherubim, in light unapproachable and full of glory, hear our humble petition, and send Thine Holy Ghost to teach and inform us in the way everlasting!

I. *What does our Lord command us to do?* You, brethren, I doubt not, readily anticipate the reply, from the clear connection between the words of the command and the thing intended by the Saviour. You, I have no hesitation in believing, comprehend full well, that when the Redeemer says, “do this,” He speaks of the blessed sacrament of His Body and Blood. I am persuaded that such is the case; yet I am almost certain that neither you nor any other assembly of Christian worshippers in our branch of the Church Catholic, have duly weighed and understood what these few words bind upon every soul among us. See, now, if I have not

good ground for my conviction. "The Lord Jesus (says St. Paul) the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."¹ There were the consecrated symbols of that body which was soon to be broken, and that blood which was soon to be poured out on the cross. They were set before the faithful disciples of the incarnate Lord God. His sacred hands broke the bread, and gave to His disciples, and they did all eat thereof. His hands administered the cup of blessing, of which they all did drink; and His lips gave utterance to the command,—do this now; do this always, even unto the end of the world. Eat and drink my Body and Blood, and feed on me evermore in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving. And *we* have the same heavenly banquet now spread before *us*; we have the same Lord Jesus here present, not to the eye of sense, indeed, but to the eye of faith, as certainly as He was in that upper room on the night of His betrayal:² by the hands of His

1) 1 Cor. xi. 23-26.

1) Being assembled for no other cause which they could imagine but to have eaten the passover only that Moses appointeth, when they saw their Lord and Master, with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, first bless and consecrate for the endless good of all generations till the world's end, the chosen elements of bread and wine, which elements made for ever the instruments of life by virtue of His Divine benediction, they being the first that were commanded to receive from Him, the first which were warranted by His promise that not only unto them, at the present time, but to whomsoever they and their successors after them did duly administer the same, those mysteries should serve as conducts of life, and coveyances of His body and blood unto them, was it possible they should hear that voice, "Take, eat, this is my body; drink ye all of this, this is my blood;" possible that doing what was required, and believing what was promised, the same should have present effect in them, and not fill them with a kind of fearful admiration at the heaven which they saw in themselves? They had at that time a sea of comfort and joy to wade in, and we, by that which they did, are taught that this heavenly food is given for the satisfying of our empty souls, and not for the exercising of our curious and subtle wits.—HOOKER'S *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. c. lxvii. § 4.

2) Albeit, then, the manner be not of us over curiously inquired or searched

commissioned ambassador, He this day breaks to us, who truly believe in Him, the bread of life, and gives to us the blood of the new covenant. We are gathered here, professedly His disciples ; we have come to His house, and are called by His name, and claim to be His followers, and call Him Master and Lord. To us He says, as plainly and as distinctly as though His voice were audible in our midst, “do this” which I command you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Few though these words be, yet how comprehensive, how full of meaning ! What unutterable, what momentous consequences are involved in them ! How little thought of ; how little weighed ; how seldom obeyed ! God our Saviour commands, and yet we dare to disobey ! The Lord speaks to us from heaven, and yet we turn away and heed not His gracious voice ! *We*, I say, who are Christ’s own people, purchased with His blood ; we who are now in His presence, will, many of us, have the awful presumption to despise His command, by turning our backs unto Him and not our face ! O say I not well, that rarely do we take in the full and deep meaning of our Lord’s words ?

Is, however, the question still asked, what are we to do ? Behold, the answer is before us. Here is the altar, the table of the Lord ; here are the evidences of His dying love ; here is the mean of rich and precious grace. We are to gather round His altar ; we are to come, humbly and faithfully, to the Gospel feast ; we are to take what He here

after, yet the same presence of Christ is acknowledged which Christ Himself would have to be acknowledged. We say with St. Ambrose, that there is not taken from bread the substance thereof, but that there is adjoined the grace of Christ’s body after a manner ineffable.—Let the devout Christian call to mind that He that said of the wine, “This is my blood,” and of the bread, “This is my body,” said also of St. John the Baptist, “This is that Elias,” and of Himself, “I am the door,” “the true vine,” &c.—Truly we give, and that justly, great respect and reverence to the Holy Eucharist ; for whereas bread and wine are elements naturally ordained for the sustenance of the body, by the power of Divine Benediction, they do receive a virtue that, being received of the faithful, they become nourishment of the soul, nay, they become means whereby we are sanctified both in body and soul, and are made members of Christ.—DR. SUTTON, *On the Sacrament*, p. 292, 279, 283.

gives us, knowing that when He hath spoken, it shall come to pass ; and we are in this way to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

II. Seeing now that such is our Lord's command, let us inquire, *for what purpose are we to do this?* The Saviour Himself supplies the answer: "do this *in remembrance of me.*" Yes, in remembrance of Christ ; for here is the standing memorial of His sacrifice on the cross ; here is what ever keeps in perpetual memory Him, whom to know is life eternal.¹ And we are commanded to make this memorial, and to have in memory this His precious death and passion, even until His coming again in great power and majesty to judge the world. When, then, ye who have been baptized into His name come into this His house, and see, as ye do this day, spread before you the divinely appointed symbols of the broken body and shed blood of your dying Redeemer ; when you hear, in accents so plain that even the most illiterate can understand full well, this same Redeemer exclaim, "do this ;" ask yourselves for what intent the Saviour commanded this, and impress it upon your hearts that you are to do it in remembrance of Him ; in remembrance of what He did and suffered in the days of His flesh ; in remembrance of what He has done for His Church, ever since the beginning of the world, and is now doing for her by His Holy Spirit ; and in especial remembrance of His dying to redeem you from sin and its dread consequences, and to exalt you

1) Here we have Christ crucified before our eyes, represented lively before us as upon the cross : while as the signs of His blessed Body and Blood being sundered the one of them from the other, the one is broken and the other poured out ; remembering us how His sacred body was broken with the crown of thorns, the scourges, the nails, the spear ; how out of his wounded hands, feet, head, and side, there issued a stream of blood.—The bread represents His body, and the wine His blood : and there be who think that our Saviour made choice of these, for that these, being the chief of our corporal preservatives, are fittest to set forth our spiritual nourishment : but this I neither affirm nor deny. That which is more material to know, is the *change of these*, which is *wholly sacramental, not in substance but in use*. For they remain bread and wine still, such as before in nature : but consecrated and set apart to represent our Saviour's passion, and exhibit and seal to a worthy receiver the benefits of that passion.—
BR. NICHOLSON, *On the Catechism*, p. 176, 177.

unto everlasting life.¹ These things you are ever to remember; and this holy sacrament is calculated most forcibly to remind you of what ought ever to be stamped in living characters on your hearts; for, surely, you cannot kneel around His holy table, and take of the consecrated elements, wholly forgetful of the meaning and intent of our gracious Lord in instituting the holy communion of His Body and Blood. Surely, His voice is not unheard; His words are not unlistened to, when he says, "do this in remembrance of me."

Having thus briefly, yet with sufficient fulness, I trust, set before you the Divine institution and perpetual obligation of this holy sacrament, I might leave you to draw the necessary conclusions for yourselves, and determine, each in his own case, what personal concern he has in the matter; and this would be quite enough, were men as desirous to know and obey the truth as they ought to be. But while there is so much indolence of spirit, so much carelessness, not to say repugnance, respecting our duties as Christians, I cannot forbear to press upon you, even at the risk of what you may think tediousness, the *plainness* and *positiveness* of our Lord's command. It is expressed in no ambiguous words, or doubtful terms; it requires no learning, or exercise of critical skill, no stretch of the memory, to comprehend what is demanded of us. Two simple words convey the Saviour's meaning with such distinctness, that it is, I may say, impossible to go wrong: "do this," one and all: wherever there is a son or daughter of Adam baptized into

1) As Baptism comes in the place of the Jews' circumcision, so doth our Lord's Supper answer to their passover. Their paschal lamb represented our Saviour Christ, and the sacrificing of it the shedding of His blood upon the cross; and as the passover was the memorial of the Israelites' redemption from Egypt's bondage, (Exod. xii. 14,) so is the Lord's Supper the memorial of our redemption from the slavery of sin, and ascension into Christian liberty: or, rather, it is a solemn and lively representation of the death of Christ, and offering it again to God, as an atonement for sin and reconciliation to His favor. So that I believe this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, under the Gospel, succeeds to the right of sacrificing under the law, and is properly called *the Christian Sacrifice*, as representing the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.—BP. BEVERIDGE, "*Private Thoughts*," &c., p. 80.

my name, there does my command reach: "do this," if ye believe in me; "do this," as oft as your Lord bids you to His festal board; "do this" continually all your life long, even until my coming again.

This command, moreover, is *positive*. There is no qualifying clause by which it may, with any show of reason, be perverted to suit this man's fancy, or that man's notions, or the other man's scruples. It is so imperative that none can escape from its obligation; no excuses can avail; no condition, whether high or low, rich or poor, whether exposed to greater or less temptation, or whether demanding more or less of our time, or our talents, no condition in which a man can be placed, can free him from the obligation of this command. Men may, indeed, break or despise the command; one man may think it is not positively needful for his spiritual welfare, and persuade himself that he can do well enough without the Holy Communion; another may indulge in sin and worldliness so much and so generally, that conscience declares at once that he is in such a state that he cannot draw near with faith, and take the holy sacrament to his comfort; another may be hindered by his farm, or his merchandise, or his daily employment, or something else, equally worthless as an excuse; another may have really conscientious scruples, arising out of wrong views of what the sacrament of the Lord's Supper really is, and for what it is intended; and in consequence of these, may turn away from the Lord's table; another may think himself too young; another, perhaps, may persuade himself that he is too old to begin to obey at the eleventh hour; or another may suppose that in the prime and strength of manhood, this world is to have our decided preference, and that it will be quite time enough to begin to be religious by and by. But the time would fail me in endeavoring to enumerate the multitude of excuses and hinderances, which cause so many among us to regard this command, in effect, as little better than a mere nullity. I desire you, however, my brethren, to mark well, that the Lord Jesus' command is without any exception whatsoever: "do this," binds it upon you, upon me, and

upon every living soul who hears the sound of the Gospel, *to obey without hesitation and without reserve*. Our unfitness, our fancies, our notions, our scruples, all are to be put aside. The way in which we may become meet partakers of these holy mysteries is open unto every one. Penitence, faith, and obedience, are within the reach of all; and if we regard, as we ought to do, our Lord's authority as paramount to every thing else; if we look upon what He says as demanding implicit, unconditional obedience, we shall be enabled to see our way plain before us. His command will bear down every thing which keeps us back from the heavenly feast, here set out for our acceptance; and we shall, with hearty earnestness, begin to prepare ourselves to kneel at His altar, by confessing and bewailing our manifold sins and wickednesses, by seeking indeed to be in love and charity with our neighbors, and by intending truly to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways.

One further consideration, and I have done: it is, "God manifest in the flesh," who commands you to do this in remembrance of Him: He who brought you into being, and whose mercy and power alone sustain you day by day, He commands you to do this. He who redeemed you from the curse, and plucked you as brands from the burning; He whose blood alone cleanseth from sin, and through whom only you can be saved; He commands you to come to this heavenly feast. Will ye hear, believe, and obey? Will ye come in the marriage garment of penitence and faith, and feed on the most precious Body and Blood of your crucified Redeemer? Or will ye turn your backs upon this holy table, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace? Will ye see the consecrated symbols of the Body and Blood of Him who is the life of the universe, offered for your acceptance, and yet have no desire thereby to nourish and strengthen your souls with might in the inner man? and will ye hear Him proclaim aloud, as He now does by my mouth, in language full of love, full of persuasive earnestness, "do this

in remembrance of me," and still shut up your ears, and stifle the pleadings of conscience, and harden your hearts against the monitions of the Holy Ghost? ¹ O, if ye can do thus, if ye can, as ye have often done before, treat with insulting neglect this most affecting and lively representation of Divine compassion, then is your condition truly deplorable, exceedingly dangerous, and provoking every day the overhanging wrath and indignation of the Lord of Hosts.

Let me beseech you, therefore, to flee from the wrath to come, and to betake yourselves to the stronghold. And let me entreat you again—for I shall never cease in my Master's name to entreat you—to come to Him without reserve, to hear His sacred words, and most gladly to do His holy will.

1) How little do we love our own souls if we suffer them to pine and starve for want of that food which God here dispenseth for their sustenance and comfort? If we bereave them of enjoying so high a privilege, so inestimable a benefit, so incomparable pleasures as are to be found and felt in this service, or do spring and flow from it, what reasonable excuse can we frame for such neglect? Are we otherwise employed? What business can there be more important than serving God and saving our own souls? Is it wisdom, in pursuance of any the greatest affair here, to disregard the principal concern of our souls? Do we think ourselves unfit and unworthy to appear in God's presence? But is any man unworthy to obey God's commands? Is any man unfit to implore and partake of God's mercy, if he be not unwilling to do it? What unworthiness should hinder us from remembering our Lord's excessive charity towards us, and thanking Him for it? From praying for His grace; from resolving to amend our lives? Must we, because we are unworthy, continue so still, by shunning the means of correcting and curing us? Must we increase our unworthiness by transgressing our duty? If we esteem things well, the conscience of our sinfulness should rather drive us to it, as to our medicine, than detain us from it. There is no man, indeed, who must not conceive and confess himself unworthy; therefore must no man come thither at God's call? If we have a sense of our sins, and a mind to leave them; if we have a sense of God's goodness, and a heart to thank Him for it; we are so worthy that we shall be kindly received there, and graciously rewarded. If we will not take a little care to work these dispositions in us, we are indeed unworthy; but the being so, from our own perverse negligence, is a bad excuse for the neglect of our duty. In fine, I dare say, that he, who with an honest meaning, although with an imperfect devotion, doth address himself to the performance of his duty, is far more excusable than he that, upon whatever score declineth it; no scrupulous shyness can ward us from blame; what then shall we say, if supine sloth or profane contempt are the causes of such neglect?—DR. BARROW'S *Works*, Vol. VII. p. 84.

“ Say unto them, (is the command of God Himself by the mouth of His prophet,) say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from His way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?”¹

1) Ezek. xxxiii. 11.



The Lord's Supper.

SERMON XXX.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE INSEPARABLE.

JOHN xiv. 15.—“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

THESE words of the blessed Redeemer, forming a part of His last discourse to His disciples, were uttered on the evening in which He was betrayed, while there was remaining a short season of safety and quiet communion with those who had left all to follow Him. They were deeply distressed and heavy-hearted on account of the mournful intelligence which the Saviour had communicated, respecting His betrayal by one of their little band, and His agonizing death now near at hand; they “looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake,” doubting, as it were, the possible accomplishment of His words. The gracious and all merciful Saviour, pitying their sorrow, and knowing their love toward Him, gave utterance to that long, deeply pathetic, and encouraging discourse, which St. John has recorded so much at large in his Gospel. In four several places, the beloved Disciple informs us how earnestly and affectionately the Redeemer urges upon them, and upon all His disciples, the love, and necessarily consequent obedience, which characterize all those who follow Him in truth and sincerity: “if ye love me, keep my commandments” (as in the text); “he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him;”—“if a man love me, he will keep my words;

and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him ;"—“ if ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love.” Hence, we may and ought to learn how much importance is to be attached to the infallible rule here proposed for judging respecting our state and condition in the sight of God, viz., by keeping the Saviour’s commandments : it becomes, too, peculiarly fitting that we meditate upon these words, and try and examine ourselves by this test, now when we are assembled in the house of that Lord and Saviour who died to redeem us ; and when we are again mercifully called and entreated to come, and feed upon the most heavenly banquet of His Body and Blood.

Remembering, then, that the Divine Redeemer is ever effectively present in His Church,¹ and that He will certainly bless the means of His own providing, let me, at this time, beseech you to weigh well, in the fear of God, your obligations and your privileges as Christians ;—especially in respect to the holy sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. “ If ye love me, keep my commandments ;” and “ he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ;” says the Lord and Master of us all. Do we truly love the Redeemer ? then we as truly keep His commandments : do we really keep the commandments of our Lord and our God ? then just so certainly do we love Him : the one cannot exist without the other. The man who pretends to love God, the Saviour, while at the same time he does not keep His commandments, if he be not a hypocrite, or vain fanatic, is most egregiously, yea, most fatally deceived ; and on the

1) How greatly do we need to have our faith increased in that soul-stirring, animating truth—the *abiding presence of the Redeemer with His Church*. Do we realize that Presence as the source of spiritual life, health, strength to the Church, because it is His Body, and to individuals, because they are living members of that Body ? Do we take His gracious promise to be “ always with ” those whom He sends forth as the Father had sent Him, in its fulness of meaning and unlimitedness of application ? Fathers and brethren, our past history, our present situation, our difficulties, and doubts, and fears, our hesitancy in doctrine and timidity in action, prove that we do not !—BR. WHITTINGHAM, *Sermon at Consecration of Bishop Henshaw*, 1843, p. 15.

other hand, the man who honestly and heartily strives, in faith and fear, to keep all the commandments of God, which are written in His holy Word, or enjoined by His Church, so far from being distressed with doubts and fears concerning the love which fills, more or less completely, the soul of every disciple of Christ, may and ought to be certain that he does love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; since it is impossible that he can live a life of prayer and praise, and of constant devotion to God, without he loves that Saviour who died for him, and plucked him as a brand from the burning. These, however, are broad and general statements, and therefore not likely to make the individual impression which is so desirable and so needful; we must, then, enter a little more into particulars, and determine somewhat more precisely, what is the love of or toward God required on our part, and what we are to understand by "the commandments," here and elsewhere spoken of in Holy Scripture.

The love so constantly enjoined and enforced by the Saviour and His Apostles, is of the most pure and elevated character; it has none of the base alloy of human frailty and passion, none of that familiarity or desire, none of those doubts or apprehensions, or jealous fears, which mingle more or less with the affections of this life; all such things are of the earth, earthy; the love which is from heaven, and which keeps heaven and the bliss of heaven constantly in view, is heavenly; reverence and godly fear, humility and contrition, docility and cheerful readiness to hear and obey: these, and such like, are constituent elements in true godly love. There is in this love a continual remembrance that God is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; and ever is there present in the soul thankful adoration unto the Triune God of our salvation, for what He has done for us; He created us, and has preserved and preserves us in being; He has given us life and health, and the enjoyment of our natural and mental powers; He redeemed us by the death and passion of His Son Jesus Christ; He created us anew, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, forgiving us our sins and receiving us again into

favor: He sanctified us by the Holy Spirit's gracious influence, quickening, purifying, and enlightening our hearts and minds; and He is guiding us, day by day, by this unseen, yet all powerful grace and strength in the onward, upward path toward heaven and eternal joy: in consequence of all which we know that God is our Father, and that we are His children in Christ Jesus; we know that He pities us with never ceasing compassion; we know that His ear is ever open to hear our prayers, His arm ever stretched out to save, His angels ever near at hand to minister to the heirs of salvation; we know that He is perpetually present, ruling and guiding all things by His providential care, restraining the wrath and wickedness of man, that so it shall turn to His own praise, and that so His elect, the Church, which He purchased by the blood of His dear Son, may ere long triumph over sin, Satan, and death: we know, too, that there is none so humble, none so low in this world's estimation, as to be beneath His watchful care and concern; and that there is none so high and lofty, or so proud and full of vanity and conceit of their own consequence, as to be beyond the reach of His retributive justice.

The soul that loves the Lord her God knows and realizes all this; and because and above all other things, (since in this centres, from this flows, every good and every mercy to man,) the redeeming love of God in and through Christ is the Fountain of life and joy, she clings to the cross of the Divine Saviour, and learns there the lesson of humility and patience, of endurance and resignation, of the loathsomeness of sin, which required so great a sacrifice, and of the certainty of His compassion, who laid down His life for our sakes. Wherefore, (as says one who knew and exemplified this love's all-pervading influence,) "when once the soul is fixed on the supreme and all-sufficient good, (i. e. the love of God for us through Christ,) it finds so much perfection and goodness, as doth not only answer and satisfy its affection, but master and overpower it too; it finds all its love to be too faint and languid for such a noble object, and is only sorry that it can command no more. It wishes for the flames of a

seraph, and longs for the time when it shall be wholly melted and dissolved in love ; and because it can do so little itself, it desires the assistance of the whole creation, that angels and men would concur with it in the admiration and love of those infinite perfections.”¹

But not to dwell upon a theme of so great magnitude, let us endeavor to see what we are to understand by “the commandments,” which the Saviour (in the text) requires us to keep, if we love Him. I suppose that in fact there is very little doubt in the minds of any intelligent persons as to what are the commandments of God. Every one who can and does read Holy Scripture, knows full well, that in it is contained not only an account of what God has done for our race, but also what He requires of us, the creatures of His hand, ransomed from death and misery. Whatsoever, therefore, He has caused to be plainly written in His Word, respecting the duties and obligations laid upon us, or whatsoever respecting

1) REV. HENRY SCUGAL’S *Works*, p. 34.

O my God, possess my soul with such ardent love of Thee, so buoyant above all my other affections, that no one may ever come in competition with it ; such a love as may not only subdue all other affections, but purify and make them innocent ; such a love, as may create in my soul a perpetual pleasure in the contemplation of Thee, and a continual thirst after Thee, never to be quenched but by the fulness of enjoyment ; a love which may transport my soul with Thy divine perfection, and paint there such lively images, such bright ideas of Thy glorious majesty, that none of the trifling pleasures and temptations of this world may be able to make on it the least impression. And as, my gracious Lord, Thou hast given me much, and forgiven me much, so raise my love to a degree proportionable to Thy bounty and mercy !—HON. CHARLES HOW, “*Devout Meditations*,” Sect. LX.

O divine love ! the sweet harmony of souls ! the music of angels ! the joy of God’s own heart ! the very darling of His bosom ! the source of true happiness ! the pure quintessence of heaven ! that which reconciles the jarring principles of the world, and makes them all chime together ! that which melts men’s hearts into one another ! See how St. Paul describes it, and you cannot choose but have your affections enamored toward it : “love envieth not, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” I may add, in a word, it is the best natured thing, the best complexioned thing in the world. Let us express this sweet harmonious affection in these jarring times : that so if it be possible we may tune the world into better music.—DR. RALPH CUDWORTH, *Parish Library*, Vol. X. p. 314.

the same is necessarily to be inferred from His Word, that we are to observe and do, without hesitation, and with our whole soul, body, and spirit. Does He, the Author and Finisher of our faith, declare that He came not to destroy, not to abrogate or annul, but to confirm and establish for ever the moral law, as contained in the Ten Commandments? Does He, at whose supreme disposal are all things in heaven and in earth, command all men every where to repent? does He say, without faith it is impossible to please Him; and without holiness no man shall see the Lord? does He assure us that none, young or old, can enter His kingdom here, that is, His Church, except they be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost; and does He command all nations, that is, men, women, and children, without distinction, or exemption of age or sex, to be baptized and thereby made disciples of His? does He require of us to be careful to maintain good works; to walk worthy of our vocation as new creatures in Christ Jesus; to be modest, humble, gentle, patient, forbearing, and forgiving; or does He require any thing else of us, which He tells how and gives us the strength to perform? then, my brethren, as I have just before said, we are to observe and to do, without reserve, and with our best energies.

It comes not, however, within the scope of the present discourse to make any thing of an orderly enumeration and arrangement of the commandments and precepts enjoined upon us in Holy Writ; they who read, or hear the Scriptures read, are, I doubt not, sufficiently informed in this respect, not to err or to sin through ignorance: it is rather my desire and intention to hold up the one commandment of the Redeemer, which is generally slighted and practically despised in this parish, and to urge it upon your hearts and consciences, that you may not either be deceived, or deceive your own selves. You know, that the Lord Jesus did institute His holy sacrament as a pledge of His love, and as a mean of grace and comfort to the souls of believers; you remember, that it was on the night in which He was betrayed into the hands of sinful men, and but a few short

hours before His sacrifice on the cross, that He gave to His Apostles, and through them to His Church in all ages, His last and dying command, "do this in remembrance of me;"—take of this consecrated bread, and drink of this consecrated wine, the symbols of my broken body and shed blood; and in this manner show forth, publish openly, my death, until I come again to judge both the quick and the dead: and you do not forget, I trust, that the Holy Ghost, speaking by the mouth of His Apostles, reiterates this command of the Lord Jesus, assuring us that the cup of blessing which the ministry of Christ are commissioned to bless, is the communion, or the communication to us, of the Blood of Christ; and the bread which these same break, is the communion, or the communication to us, of the Body of Christ, with all the beneficial effects procured for us by the atoning sacrifice of the Redeemer.¹

1) Many Protestants regard the Eucharist as merely a feast; in which with suitable dispositions, bread and wine are received in memory of their Saviour. But surely something more than this was meant, when our blessed Redeemer solemnly took the bread and wine and blessed them. For what did He bless them? Surely to be symbols of His Body and Blood. As symbols they must have been offered as an act of worship to His Almighty Father. As symbols they were given to the disciples and received by them. And all this which He did, Christ commanded His disciples to do in remembrance of Him, and thus to show forth His death until He come. On this authority our Church directs the priest, in her Communion office, to bless the bread and wine, to be symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ, and thus to make a solemn *oblation* of them to the Father, beseeching Him that they who worthily receive them may be partakers of His Body and Blood. This form of celebrating the Eucharist conformable to the liturgies of the primitive ages, she has derived immediately from the venerable Episcopal Church of Scotland, who by God's gracious Providence, has preserved through great sufferings and trials, the faith, ministry, and worship, of the first and purest ages of the Church. The Churchman, then, maintains the *oblation* in the Eucharist, *of the bread and wine as symbols and memorials of the Body and Blood of Christ*. He will not be tenacious of the term *sacrifice* as applicable to the offering of the consecrated elements. For in the appropriate application of the term it doubtless denoted those offerings only in which there was shedding of blood. Neither the liturgy of His Church, nor the primitive liturgies apply this term to the bread and wine of the Eucharist. All due significance is given to this most sacred ordinance when there is *a solemn oblation made by God's authorized minister of the consecrated bread and wine, as symbols and memorials of the Body and Blood of Christ; assuring to those who worthily receive them all the blessings of His meritorious cross and passion.*—Bp. HOLEART, "*Principles of the Churchman*," p. 11.

You know and remember all this, I have no doubt, and you cannot but feel assured that this command is imperatively binding upon the disciples of the Saviour. Being thus confident that you do not sin ignorantly, in refusing to come when you are so lovingly called and invited to the heavenly feast, I beseech you to hear your Master's words, which by my mouth He this day proclaims in your midst:—"If ye love me, keep my commandments"—"he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him"—"if a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"—"if ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." Do you think that you love this Saviour of your souls? O how can you think so, if you keep not His commandments? Do you suppose that a partial service, however faithfully or exactly performed, will in any wise compensate for neglect or denial of what is plainly written and positively enjoined? O let no such vain delusion find place among you; for the Holy Spirit says expressly, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;"—whosoever shall do his duty in all respects except one, making a practice of offending only in one point, he is guilty of dishonoring the commands and despising the authority of the Divine Lawgiver, just as certainly as though he offended in many points: and the Lord says, he that keepeth my commandments—not one or two or more, but *all* my commandments—he it is, *and none else*, that loveth me in sincerity and truth.

My brethren, ye to whom the command of Christ, to be meet partakers of the holy sacrament of His Body and Blood, especially applies, ye may think that ye believe in Him, and live according to His Gospel; ye may hope or expect to die in Him, and to be eternally happy through Him in the world to come;—and I pray God that ye, one and all, may indeed be among the ransomed of the Lord in the day when He maketh up His jewels;—but I know that ye are

not safe in your present course ; and I ask you on what grounds you can flatter yourselves that you truly believe in Christ, when you are not doing what He commands ? What reason have you to hope or expect that He will pardon your wilful neglect, or wilful, habitual denial of His dying command ? Is it not He Himself who says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven ?"¹ "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ?"² "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven : but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."³ Wherefore, I entreat you, in the name of our Master, think and act as becometh reasonable men, who know that they must give account of their stewardship ; and let no excuse whatsoever hinder you from an honest and faithful obedience to His command. Ask God in faith for His Holy Spirit, and ye shall receive His gracious, quickening influence ; seek for genuine penitence and faith, and ye shall find them ; but if ye will not ask, will not seek, will not knock, O why should you expect to receive, or find, or have the door of heaven and eternal felicity opened for your admission ?

I do not urge this holy sacrament upon you, as though it were a charm, or as though the bare partaking of it were all ; I do not, as the minister of Christ, say to you, come, whether or no you are prepared, by being truly penitent, believing, and in charity with all men ; no, God forbid ; not, in the slightest degree would I lower the reverent and holy estimation in which we ought to hold this sacrament ; and in no wise would I detract from the most careful, thorough preparation for its due reception : but consider with yourselves, that it is no excuse to say ye are not prepared when ye have been warned day by day, and urged, and shown how ye ought to prepare yourselves ; the guilt remains,—yea, rather, is in-

1) Matt. vii. 21.

2) Luke vi. 46.

3) Matt. x. 32, 33.

creased by repeated delays. Come ye, then, who wish to show that ye love the Lord Jesus in sincerity ; come, and do what He commands ; come, truly and earnestly repenting of your sins ; being in love and charity with your neighbors ; endeavoring to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways ; yea, draw near with faith, and ye shall take this holy sacrament to your comfort and everlasting refreshment.¹

1) Dost Thou bid me, O Saviour, do this in remembrance of Thee ? O how can I forget Thee ? how can I enough celebrate Thee, for this Thy unspeakable mercy ? Can I see Thee thus crucified before my eyes, and for my sake thus crucified, and not remember Thee ? Can I find my sins accessary to this Thy death, and Thy death meritoriously expiating all these my grievous sins, and not remember Thee ? Can I hear Thee freely offering Thyself to me, and feel Thee graciously conveying Thyself into my soul, and not remember Thee ? I do remember Thee, O Saviour : but oh ! that I could yet more effectually remember Thee ; with all zealous desires to glorify Thee ; with all the fervent longings after Thee and Thy salvation ! I remember Thee in Thy sufferings ; O do Thou remember me in Thy glory.--BR. HALL, "*The Devout Soul*," ch. iv. § 3.



SERMON XXXI.

THE PRIESTLY OFFICE.

2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.—“ We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish : to the one we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other the savour of life unto life.”

IN treating of the ministerial office, its nature, duties, powers, responsibilities, &c., I shall take for granted that truth which has again and again been substantiated in the clearest and fullest manner ; viz., the Divine institution of the three orders, Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and consequently their universal and perpetual obligation in the Church of God. This is done, not from any unwillingness to enter upon the question which schism and heresy have caused much to be discussed within the last three hundred years, but simply in order to prevent distraction of mind on so momentous a subject, and in order to fix attention upon one point, which ought ever to be specially considered. And this in fact is the course which our branch of the Church herself pursues ; she nowhere enters at large upon the proofs by which are established the Divine source and authority of the three orders : deeming it a matter which can never be controverted on any good grounds, and regarding it as a point definitively settled in the judgment of every diligent and unprejudiced inquirer after truth, she briefly declares her sense on the subject in these words ; “ it is evi-

dent unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests and Deacons."¹

Assuming, then, as we are justified in doing, that the three orders form an integral part of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, let me invite you to the special consideration of that view of the priestly office and its effects, to which we are led by the language of St. Paul recited as our text. We, says this holy and great Apostle, speaking of those who are commissioned with the ministry of reconciliation, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other we are the savour of life unto life." In other words, "the ministry of Christ are they who are sent by the Master Himself, to go

1) Preface to the Ordinal.

1) Lest the reader should suppose that too much is assumed in the prefatory remarks just given, I beg leave not only to refer him to the sound and convincing works of Bp. Hobart, Bp. H. U. Onderdonk, Dr. Bowden, Mr. Palmer, and others, but also to quote from two writers of the Church of England, of logical acuteness and power rarely if ever surpassed:—"An infallible demonstration of *Episcopacy*: for which this is to be said, that it has all the *four marks* before mentioned, to ascertain any fact, in the concurrent testimony of all Churches, at all times; and therefore must infallibly be the government, [i. e. rather, the *constitution* of the Church,] which the Apostles left upon the earth. To which we must adhere, till a greater authority than theirs shall alter it."—(REV. CHARLES LESLIE's *Letter to a Converted Deist*, § XIV.) "When I shall see all the fables in the metamorphosis acted, and prove true stories; when I shall see all the democracies and aristocracies in the world lie down and sleep, and awake into monarchies; then will I begin to believe that Presbyterian government having continued in the Church during the Apostles' time, should presently after, (against the Apostles' doctrine and the will of Christ,) be whirled about, like a scene in a mask, and transformed into Episcopacy. In the mean time, while these things remain thus incredible, and in human reason impossible, I hope I shall have leave to conclude thus:—Episcopal government is acknowledged to have been universally received in the Church presently after the Apostles' times. Between the Apostles' times and this presently after, there was not time enough for, nor possibility of, so great an alteration. And therefore there was no such alteration as is pretended. And therefore Episcopacy being confessed to be so ancient and catholic, must be granted also to be Apostolic; *quod erat demonstrandum*."—CHILLINGWORTH's "*Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy demonstrated*;" *Works*, p. 509,

into all the world and make disciples of all nations, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; the Gospel of pardon and peace through the atoning blood of Christ, which Gospel is committed to their trust, is meetly termed the sweet savour of Christ, because through Him it brings happiness, peace, and life eternal within the reach of all to whom it is proclaimed: but though this be the nature and intent of the Gospel, which the Saviour has commanded to be preached to every creature, it does not produce the same effect in and upon all; some believe, obey, and are saved; others are impenitent, unbelieving, and disobedient, and so perish: to the one class the fragrance of the Gospel becomes a deadly savour, ending in misery and eternal ruin; but to the other it becomes a life-giving savour, resulting in eternal blessedness.

There is, surely, something very solemn in all this, when we remember of whom the Apostle is speaking, and what momentous interests are involved; and it must, I think, strike every reflecting mind with something akin to awe, to consider how mysteriously the soul's interests are connected with the office of the "man of God" whom we are to obey.¹ At all times, from the cradle to the grave, he stands ready to minister in Christ's name, and by His authority, to our spiritual needs. As the steward of the mysteries and the manifold grace of God, he meets us at our entrance upon life; born in sin and the children of wrath, through his instrumentality we are washed in the laver of regeneration, being in and by Holy Baptism, "made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." The "babes" in Christ he feeds with "the sincere milk of the Word," training them up in the nurture and admonition of

1) Christ intended that those whom He had made guides of our souls and judges of our consciences in order to counsel and ministerial pardon, should also be used by us in all cases of our souls, and that we go to heaven the way He hath appointed, that is, by office and ministries ecclesiastical. . . . Let not any Christian men, either by false opinion, or an unbelieving spirit, or an incurious apprehension, undervalue or neglect this ministry which Christ hath so sacredly and solemnly established.—BR. JEREMY TAYLOR'S *Works*, Vol. I. p. 348, 9. Lond. Ed. 1836, 3 vols.

the Lord; and when they are "of full age," he dispenses to them the "strong meat" of the Gospel. The Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, we receive at his hands; and we and all who duly receive these holy mysteries, are fed with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ; are assured thereby of God's favor and goodness toward us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of His everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of His dear Son. So too, as an ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech us by his mouth, he prays us in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. As a messenger of the Lord of Hosts; as a watchman, anxiously caring for the souls committed to his charge, knowing that he must give account at the last day; as a shepherd of Christ's sheep; he teaches and premonishes; he feeds and provides for the Lord's family; he seeks for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. A "preacher" of the glad tidings of great joy to all people, he proclaims the one only way of salvation; he shows us what we must do to be saved; "in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking, exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine," he does the work of an evangelist, "rightly dividing the Word of truth;" and he never ceases his labor, his care and diligence, until he has done all that lieth in him, according to his bounden duty, to bring all that are committed to his charge unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there is no place left among them, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.

He it is, the man of God, who has the rule over us, whom we are to obey, and to whom we are to submit ourselves; for he is the instrument or agent by whose hands God has been pleased to dispense unspeakable blessings to our race; he is the one whom the Master Himself has commissioned

to preach the everlasting Gospel; he is the one by whose hands the holy sacraments are administered, wherein we are born of water and of the Holy Ghost, and wherein we are nurtured and strengthened by the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ; he is the one to whom God has given power and commandment to declare and pronounce unto His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins;¹ he is the one who waits upon our every step, teaching us godly and wholesome doctrine, building us up in our most holy faith, warning us against all false doctrine, heresy and schism, urging upon us day by day, our soul's eternal interests, ministering to us in prosperity and adversity, counselling, guiding, watching, and praying with us in the chamber of sickness and of death, and last of all committing our bodies to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in hope of the resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come through our Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge, is the man of God called! who is sufficient for these things! what is man that he should be a worker together with God! what are the "earthen vessels,"² that they should have "this treasure" in them! what are those, whom, though subject to all the infirmities and frailties of human nature, we are commanded to venerate, and to "esteem very highly in love for their work's sake!" ought we not to fear, lest, regarding them simply as men like ourselves, we lose sight of, and undervalue, the high, and holy, and momentous charge committed to their trust?³

1) I shall beg leave to lay it down as a plain, undeniable, Christian truth, that the order of the clergy is an order of as necessary obligation as the sacraments, and as unalterable as the Holy Scriptures; the same Holy Ghost being as truly the author and founder of the priesthood as the institutor of the sacraments or the inspirer of those Divine Oracles.—(REV. WM. LAW'S *First Letter to Bp. Hoadley*, p. 47.

2) 2 Cor. vi. 1.

3) We minister to souls. Souls! Methinks in that one word there is a Sermon. Immortal souls! precious souls! one whereof is more worth than all the world besides,—the price of the blood of the Son of God!—Methinks I may use the Apostle's words in another case; "ye see your calling, brethren." (1 Cor. i. 26.) You see how extremely difficult and hazardous an office it is we have

This, however, is a matter on which I may not enlarge on the present occasion; it is rather my duty, following the guidance of the holy Apostle, to dwell more particularly upon that view of the priestly office and its results, which is set before us in the text; "we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life." Here we may make the broad and general statement, viz., that the ministry of Christ's Church, who are sent expressly to dispense abroad the sweet odor of the Gospel of life and peace, are to us and to all among whom they labor, and whom they admonish, a specially appointed mean of our going forward in our Christian course, and becoming better, day by day, or on the other hand, of our growing worse, and becoming hardened in indifference and sin; "to those who perish we are

undertaken; "who is sufficient for these things?" whose loins do not tremble at this fearful burden on his shoulders? who would not be almost tempted to repent himself of his undertaking, and to wish himself any the meanest mechanic, rather than a minister? But, alas! this were vain, yea, sinful. We are engaged in this sacred office, and there is no retreating; we must now run the hazard, how great soever it be; in we are, and on we must. What shall we then say? what shall we do? Surely this is our best, yea, our only course. Let us first prostrate ourselves at the feet of the Almighty God, humbly confessing and heartily bewailing our great and manifold miscarriages in this weighty undertaking; let us weep tears of blood (if it were possible) for the blood of souls, which we have reason to fear, may stick upon our garments. The blood of souls, I say: for when I consider how many less discerned ways there be, whereby a man may involve himself in that guilt, as not only by an openly vicious example, but even by a less severe, prudent, and wary conversation; not only by actions directly criminal, but by lawful actions, when offensive; (for by these, the Apostle assures us, "a man may destroy the soul of his weak brother for whom Christ died;") not only by a gross negligence and supine carelessness, but by every lesser remission of those degrees of zeal and diligence which are so requisite in so important an affair: in a word, by not doing all that a man can, and lies within his power to save the souls committed to his charge;—I say, when I consider this, for mine own part I cannot, I dare not justify myself, or plead not guilty before the great Judge of heaven and earth; but do upon the bended knees of my soul, bewail my sin, and implore His pardoning grace and mercy, crying mightily unto Him; "Deliver me from this blood guiltiness, O my God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness!"—BP. BULL, "*Visitation Sermon of the Priestly Office*," p. 17.

the savour of death unto death, but to those who are saved we are the savour of life unto life." This result, startling though it may appear, grows out of the very nature and object of the Gospel ministry; for, let it be asked, for what purpose did our Divine Lord and Master commission His Apostles and their successors, even unto the end of the world? Why did He institute His Church, and send His ministering servants to gather into its fold all nations on the face of the earth? Why did He ordain holy mysteries, the pledges of His love, and the sure witnesses of the verity of His promises? Why did He command the Word to be preached, the sacraments to be administered, His people to be gathered together, to offer up united prayers and praises in His house, His holy Word to be read and diligently studied, and whatever else it becomes a Christian to know and to do? Surely it was not all for naught; surely it was in the fulness of His mercy and compassion, in order that His people might grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Him their Lord and Saviour.

This being undoubtedly so, we see at once, I think, that the ministerial office is a very important mean of grace; rightly used, the ministry becomes to us the savour of life unto life; by their labors, the unsearchable riches of Christ are set before us, in their unspeakable value and preciousness; the way of salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ is opened to us, and we are urged and besought to walk therein; our lost and miserable condition by nature is vividly portrayed; the necessity of the enlightening and sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost is distinctly declared; and we are clearly taught, that by one Spirit we may ever have access unto the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. In our doubts and perplexities, in our want of knowledge, when harassed by the flimsy but loud pretensions of infidelity, or distressed by the specious and plausible reasonings of heretics and schismatics, we may safely have recourse to the ministry, and be taught by them in the good old paths of the Gospel and the Church. When weighed down by the consciousness and the burden of sin, or filled with doubts

and fears, lest we err ignorantly in unbelief, the ministry will be our spiritual counsellors and guides; they will ease our doubts; they will show us the unreasonableness of our fears; and they will point us to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

The ministry, then, duly and properly used, are helps of the most valuable kind in this our probationary state, and through their agency we may be built up day by day; we may be enabled to give an answer to them that ask a reason of the hope that is in us; we may be strengthened, stablished, settled in the faith once delivered to the saints: the odor of the Gospel will have to us a life-giving fragrance and efficacy, and we shall go on continually, increasing in all virtue and godliness of living.

If, on the other hand, men bring themselves practically to despise the ambassadors for Christ, and refuse to avail themselves of their aid and guidance, the result will be far different, and most lamentable; spiritual slumber will gradually envelop and deaden all the energies of their souls—spiritual ignorance will cover them as with a mantle—spiritual pride and conceit, which are in exact proportion to the want of a due apprehension of the spirit of the Gospel, will increase more and more—and though they may be preserved from the cold, sickly horrors of open infidelity, there is little reason to hope that they will profit much by this, for at best, unless saved so as by fire, they will have but a name to live, being really dead in trespasses and sins. Ah, and we know that the warnings uttered by the ministering servants of God, the dread denunciations in His Holy Word against sin, sloth, carelessness, and impenitence, which are read in their ears again and again, the moving exhortations to holiness and purity, and that most affecting exhibition of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is displayed to our view in the Holy Eucharist;—ah, if these be unheeded—if these be unlistened to—if these be turned away from—we know how grievous is the sin, and how sore punishment hangeth over their heads for the same. It cannot be that the gracious Redeemer will lightly pass over the

insult done to Him, by despising or undervaluing His ambassadors: it cannot be that He will suffer His laws to be trampled upon with impunity, or Himself put to an open shame by those whom He has called and admitted to the privileges of His Church: it cannot be that the Spirit of grace will always suffer men to do despite unto Himself, by turning away from those whom He has made overseers, whom He has sanctified and set apart to feed the Church of God, which was purchased with the blood of the Eternal Son.

Why should it be otherwise? Why should it be thought a strange thing, that God, in His mysterious wisdom, should have ordered the intervention of men between Himself and His creatures? Why should men exclaim against the office and agency of Christ's ministering servants, who, the holy Apostle St. Paul assures us, are expressly sent to "SAVE THEM THAT HEAR" and obey?¹ And why, when as we see, the whole world is full of this dependence of one upon another for happiness, for character, for information, for moral and intellectual culture, and for every thing which makes life desirable; or when, as we know, the Church of God from the beginning, has learned that it receives spiritual blessings and guidance by the hands, or through the agency of Prophets, Priests, Apostles, Evangelists, and Doctors, set apart by Divine appointment for this holy vocation;—why, I say, seeing and knowing all this, do we, or any, dare to entertain sacrilegious thoughts, or infidel sentiments, respecting those whom our Lord Christ is with alway, even unto the end of the world?²

1) 1 Tim. iv. 16.

1) It is the office of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and set apart persons for the duty of the ministry, ordaining them to intercede between God and His people, to send up prayers to God for them, to bless them in the name of God, to teach the doctrine of the Gospel, to administer the Sacraments instituted by Christ, to perform all things necessary 'for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.' (Eph. iv. 12.) The same Spirit which illuminated the Apostles, and endued them with power from above to perform personally their apostolical functions, fitted them also for the ordination of others and the committing of a standing power to a successive ministry unto the end of the world.—Bp. PEARSON *On the Creed*, p. 480.

2) The Christian Clergy pretend to no despotic empire over their flocks:

Let it be laid to heart, then, as a most certain truth, that the labors, the exertions, the earnest, anxious discharge of duty on the part of the men of God, minister either to salvation or to condemnation; men *must* go forward, or go backward; men *must* hear at the preacher's mouth, or perish in ignorance and sin; men *must* "be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost," or they can never enter into the kingdom of heaven; men *must* "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood," or they have no life in them, remembering always that the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed, i. e. spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper, this being the divinely appointed mean whereby the soul is nurtured and strengthened unto eternal life. If men take heed how they hear, and are careful ever to obey, they shall increase in godliness day by day, and shall have more abundance of spiritual gifts and graces; but if they refuse to hear, if they obstinately persist in blindness, ignorance and sin; if they say to Christ's ambassadors, we want not your aid, we despise your agency, we care not for your instrumentality, we can read the Bible for ourselves, we can find out our own religion, we can go to God and offer up our own supplications, we can do without the ordinances of Baptism and the Communion, we can obtain pardon for our sins from God direct, and value not your declaring it, and we want not your blessing, as if there was any virtue in it; if men say thus, in effect, if not in words, be sure they are in danger of eternal damnation; through their own fool-hardy presumption and arrogance, the ministry, who are the sweet savour of Christ, become to them the savour of

they do not assume to themselves a power to damn the innocent or to save the guilty: but they assert a sober and just right to reconcile men to God, and to act in His name in restoring them to His favor. They received their commission from those whom Christ sent with full authority to send others, and with a promise that He would be with them to the end of the world. From this they conclude that they have His authority, and that in consequence of it, their administrations are necessary and effectual to the salvation of mankind; and that none can despise them but who despise Him that sent them; and are as surely out of the covenant of grace, when they leave such His pastors as when they openly despise or omit to receive His sacraments.—REV. WM. LAW'S *First Letter to Bp. Hoadley*, p. 41.

death unto death. O sad and miserable delusion and folly ! O wretchedness indescribable, that the sweet odor of the Gospel of life and peace, the vivifying and heavenly fragrance and energy of the Word of life, which they who preach Christ crucified, hold forth unto all,¹ should be so abused and perverted by the diseased and corrupt hearts of men, as to become the odor of death—DEATH ETERNAL !

These remarks, I am deeply sensible, present but an imperfect view of the priestly office, in its manifold relations, in its important duties and high responsibilities: much might be, and on other occasions will be, said, respecting the holiness of heart and life, and the consistency of character and deportment required in the ambassador for Christ: it would, doubtless, be profitable to dwell upon the duties of the clergy toward their people ; to define, with as much precision as the matter will admit, in how far the laity are bound, by the law of God, to follow their spiritual guides or pastors, or to what extent the Lord Jesus intends their obedience to go in matters of faith and practice. These, and other branches of this extensive and deeply interesting subject should, I am aware, be enlarged upon, in order to attain a correct understanding of the true nature and perpetual Divine obligation of the ministry of reconciliation: yet there is, perhaps, the less cause for regret respecting this necessary omission at this time, inasmuch as men in these days are not at all disposed to *overvalue* the agency of the “man of God” in things pertaining to salvation ; there is no danger, at least no present danger, in this republican age and country, of undue regard, of extravagant esteem, or any thing like excessive veneration for the ministering servants of the Lord of Hosts ; so far from this, I cannot but express my sorrowful conviction, that there is in the community a wide-spread infidelity, if not heresy, on this point ;² and though I repudiate and abhor

1) Phil. ii. 16.

2) Our age is pre-eminently one of unbelief. . . . The Word of preaching and the sacraments of grace, and the commission by which both are administered and derive their efficacy from Him who alone speaks and works by the instrumentality of His ministering servants, are the deposit committed to the Church. Little by little the world and Satan are cozening her out of her

the Romish abuse and perversion of the priestly office and power, yet I pray God to bring us all to a better mind, to more sound and correct views of the duty and office of the ministry, and also how we ought to esteem them in their office.

Wherefore, my brethren, let me pray you, and beseech you in Christ's name, to ponder well the things which have been this day uttered in your ears. It is no light matter, lightly and irreverently as men may speak of it, to undervalue the high office of those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord. Beware of the sins of the age and the times in which we live, which sins are irreverence, ungodliness and presumption; and learn to know and value aright those whom God has set in the Church, even until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, let me leave with you, beseeching you to lay it up in the storehouse of memory, the testimony of the godly and well-learned Hooker:—the ministers of God, “in that they are Christ's ambassadors and His laborers, who should give them their commission but He whose most inward affairs they manage? Is not God alone the Father of spirits? Are not souls the purchase of Jesus Christ? What angel in heaven could have said to man, as our Lord did unto Peter, “Feed my sheep; Preach; Baptize; Do this in remembrance of me; whose sins ye retain they are retained; and their offences in heaven pardoned whose faults you shall on earth forgive?” What think we? Are these terrestrial sounds, or else are they voices uttered out of the clouds above? The power of the ministry of God translateth out of darkness into glory, it raiseth men from the earth, and bringeth God himself down from heaven; by blessing visible elements it maketh them invisible grace; it giveth daily the Holy Ghost; it

precious trust. Her commission they assert is vain pretence; to insist on it, narrow-minded bigotry. Her sacraments, mere expedient signs and decent rites; to recognise and expect more in them, superstition. Her message, to be heard and judged as any intellectual truths submitted to the eye in written documents, or to the ear in eloquent address; to regard it as indeed the Word of God, yet teaching by His Spirit, priestcraft and fanaticism.—BP. WHITTINGHAM, *Sermon at Consecration of Bp. Henshaw*, 1843, p. 12.

hath to dispose of that flesh which was given for the life of the world, and that blood which was poured out to redeem souls; when it poureth malediction upon the heads of the wicked, they perish; when it revoketh the same, they revive. O wretched blindness, if we admire not so great power; more wretched if we consider it aright, and notwithstanding imagine that any but God can bestow it!"¹

1) *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. V. c. lxvii.



SERMON XXXII.*

THE TRUE AND ACCEPTABLE THANKSGIVING.

EPHESIANS V. 20.--"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE occasion of our assembling together on this day is well known, I presume, to all here present. It is in obedience to the civil as well as ecclesiastical authority to which we are subject; the civil ruler recommending, annually, a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the benefits, blessings, and mercies of the past year, and the Church enjoining upon her faithful children to observe this day, and prescribing a "Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the fruits of the earth, and all the other blessings of His merciful Providence." I rejoice, my brethren, and there is good cause for joy, that this day finds us in the house of God; for it is one among the few and infrequent indications, that our country and our rulers do yet acknowledge the superintending Providence of God. It is, too, truly refreshing, and gives us room to hope for better things, amid the cold and hardly decent formality of a sentence, now and then, admitting the Divine guidance and blessing.² I doubt

1) Preached on Thanksgiving Day, Dec. 17, 1840.

2) Utter *destitution of a religious spirit* is a crying sin, for which, as a people, we must render an account. It pervades the establishment, the institutions, the conduct, of our government; the tenor of our public acts; the spirit of our public prints; every thing by which we can be known *as a people*, to our fellow-nations, and produce an impress on the character and destinies of the race. * * * There are truths, which nothing can excuse us from avowing and asserting; truths which, if we were wise, we should make the palladium of our strength, and which we must avow and cherish, and bind on the fore front of our civil polity; the BEING—PROVIDENCE—and HOLINESS OF THE CREATOR. Wo to the commu-

not that your minds are attuned in harmony with the spirit that ought to have place in every pious heart; neither do I suppose it at all necessary to dwell upon the general duty of thanksgiving for daily and hourly mercies and favors. Your character and profession as Christians, or the obligations which you feel are imposed upon you as members of Christ's Church, are a sufficient assurance, that this high duty of your calling is not now needed to be proved at large. The few remarks, therefore, to which I would this morning call your attention, will be of a more general nature than is, perhaps, suitable to the Lord's day, and upon more general topics than those which come distinctly and pointedly within the preaching of Christ crucified.

In looking back upon the past year, from the point which we now occupy, and viewing it through the medium of experience, there can be no doubt that, as a nation, we have been signally blessed. Seed time and harvest, the early and the latter rain, blessings of heaven above and of the earth beneath, all these has a gracious and benignant Providence vouchsafed us, throughout the length and breadth of our native land. The destroying Asiatic scourge, which, a few years ago, left hardly a town or village in our country free from its ravages, making men's hearts to quake with fear, has in mercy been withheld; and God has spared our land a little longer, that we may repent. He has not sent upon us "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday."¹ He has not suffered us to become a prey to the sword. He has not suffered the "lusts," which St. James tells us cause "wars and fightings" among men,² to bring upon us wide-spread and literal ruin. No—but peace, gentle, meek-eyed peace, has hovered o'er

nity where they are utterly unrecognized! And, alas! for us, that it is so nearly the case in ours! There is no social tie which does not derive from them its strength; no check on the evil passions and elements of discord which borrows not its power from them. Yet how slight is their admixture in our public acts! how completely are they wanting in the spirit of our legislation and national procedures!—Bp. WHITTINGHAM, *Sermon on a Day of Public Humiliation and Prayer*, 1832, p. 33.

1) Ps. xci. 6.

2) James iv. 1.

and around us, and sought to infuse into us that spirit which, in the sight of God, is of great price. There has been no fear of famine before our eyes, for the earth has given her increase abundantly; so that we may truly say, in the language of the "sweet singer" of Israel, "the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage."¹

These are the common, every day blessings, by which God makes it evident that He has not left Himself without witness in the earth; and for these we are called upon by the civil authority to be thankful. It is well that it is so; it is well that the government of this nominally Christian land does recognize, at times, at least, the overruling hand of Providence; it is right and proper that it should enjoin upon every good citizen to pause and desist, for one day, at least, from his daily business and cares, and unite with his fellow-citizens in thanksgivings to Him from whom alone every good and perfect gift can come. We cheerfully obey the mandate of the civil ruler; though at the same time, we feel it to be our duty to go far beyond what he has recommended. We, who claim to be Christians, cannot stand in doubt or uncertainty as to *our* obligations in this matter. We cannot for a moment hesitate as to the course we ought to pursue. We are not only citizens of these United States; our citizenship is also in heaven. We not only owe obedience to the magistrate and all set in authority over us; we are bound also to obey implicitly our King and Heavenly Master, into whose kingdom we have mercifully been admitted by Baptism. Inasmuch as we cannot, if we would, be insensible to the contest which is continually going on between virtue and vice, between unsanctified and infidel learning and true religion, we must not be backward to do our part towards resisting evil; we must not shrink from fighting manfully under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil; neither must we be afraid to look danger in the face, and proclaim openly, and adhere steadfastly

to it, that *there is only one Foundation*, whether of national, social, or individual happiness and prosperity. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."¹ Deeming it my duty as a good citizen, but more especially as an ambassador for Christ, distinctly and fearlessly to utter the truth in its integrity, I desire, both now and at all times, to speak very plainly; and while I am far from undervaluing temporal blessings as causes for thanksgivings, yet I cannot refrain from declaring, that there are other reasons, more weighty, and more deeply affecting our best interests, why our hearts should overflow with gratitude, and our tongues break forth into rejoicing. Some reminiscences of the past, will, I trust, illustrate my meaning more fully.

But little more than half a century has rolled away since the United States took its place among the nations of the earth. Then, it was poor, weak, and but ill supplied;—now, it is rich, powerful, numbers its fifteen or sixteen millions of inhabitants, and is possessed of resources almost incalculably great and extensive. Then, there was little or no provision for the general diffusion of learning and intelligence;—now, common schools and seminaries of learning are scattered over nearly the whole land. Then, the Church was but little known, and wheresoever found was the object at which to point the finger of scorn and hatred;²—now, she has taken deep root, and numbers nineteen bishops, over a thousand clergy, at least sixty thousand communicants, and more than a million of the inhabitants of the United States: she needs only to possess more of the spirit and energy of the Apostles and martyrs, in order

1) 1 Cor. iii. 11.

2) What a wonderful change has the author lived to witness, in reference to American Episcopacy! He remembers the ante-revolutionary times, when the presses profusely emitted pamphlets and newspaper disquisitions on the question, whether an American Bishop were to be endured; and when threats were thrown out of throwing such a person, if sent among us, into the river; although his agency was advocated for the sole purpose of a communion submitting itself to his spiritual jurisdiction.—BR. WHITE'S *Memoirs of the Prot. Episcopal Church in the United States*.

to gather within her fold the vast majority of the people of this land. In so far as temporal blessings are concerned, no people have been more highly favored; no nation has gone on in one continuous course of prosperity and greatness like this; and no nation in the world has so many privileges and advantages, both as to the means of finding out the truth as it is in Jesus, and in having the door of access to the spiritual ark of Christ opened wide for our admittance. Whatever may be our individual sentiments, whatever may be public opinion on this point, if we believe in the Gospel, there can be no doubt that we have especial reason to be thankful, and to praise God, for His mercy and loving-kindness; for, had not His Providence so ordered and disposed the affairs of this transitory world, we should have no cause to feel and express an honest pride in our country and her many laudable institutions. Of this truth, but a small portion of the community seem to be aware. Ask the most of men why it is, that this country has increased so rapidly in wealth and in power? why it is, that such astonishing advances have been made in the useful arts and sciences? and why it is, that, looking forward to the future, there is hardly a limit to our prospective greatness? and what is usually the answer? Is there any acknowledgment that the Most High is the primary and efficient cause of our national strength and resources? We have need to look but little way for practical answers to these and similar questions. It is only necessary to observe the spirit and conduct of men high in station and repute, of men who give a character and tone to the sentiments of thousands, and who are, in fact, the index by which we may and must judge of the virtue and intelligence of the mass of the people. Look at the shameless violations of the Lord's Day, in many parts of our country, especially in the southern and southwestern regions. See the coldness, indifference, disrespect, and sometimes positive insult, which are manifested at times respecting the religion of the cross. Note the prevalence, and, I fear, the spread, of ungodliness and infidelity; of licentiousness, luxury, vice, and crime. Mark the astounding increase of mur-

der, in its most detestable and horrid form ; in the mad array of man against man, in broad day, and in open violation of the laws of God, and of their country ;—and say, if, notwithstanding all this “wickedness in high places,” God does “good to us, and gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness ;”¹ and we continue on still in our unthankfulness and unbelief ; say, if there could be more pointed and direct proof of the real opinions of the chief men among us. Who cannot see, that our national powers and greatness are attributed to ourselves ? *Our* might, *our* skill, *our* superiority, have wrought out for us all that we possess, is the language of our actions and our speeches ; and the chord of national pride and vanity once struck, finds a sympathetic response in almost every bosom. Who that looks abroad over the vast expanse of rich and varied territory, which our country comprises, the millions that now people its soil, and the resources of greatness which are almost daily developing themselves, and does not in his heart feel disposed to exclaim, what a wonderful and mighty nation is this ! what one can compare with it ! Who can tell or imagine its success yet to come ! Ah, compared with the multitude, how few think of lifting up their hearts in grateful acknowledgments for all these things ; and in heartfelt and humble prayer, that we to whom much is given, may remember, that of us shall much be required !

Let it not be thought, my brethren, that the picture is too highly colored. Would God that the sober reality were no worse than is here represented ;—would that I could speak “peace,” and wish my country “God speed,” in her present onward progress to the summit of national greatness ! But this may not be : so long as the kingdoms of this world continue in their subjection to the prince of this world, so long will it be my duty, and the duty of every Christian, in his proper sphere, to speak plainly and pointedly, of the solemn fact, that their only safety, and their true and lasting great-

ness, consist in becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. It will hardly, I trust, be said, that this distinct and national avowal of the faith of Christ crucified is impracticable, or inconsistent with the spirit of our free institutions. It will not be thought, that there is any recommendation tending towards the union, or, rather, amalgamation, of Church and State. No; God forbid. The State is, at best, but a millstone around the neck of the Church, a hinderance, and continual source of trouble, in all her efforts. This, however, does not, in the least, take away from either the practicability, or the necessity, of this nation, *as a nation*, acknowledging, and worshipping, and serving, the Supreme Lord of heaven and earth. I need not tell you, my brethren, that this worship and service are withheld. I need not say, how small a proportion of the millions by which we are surrounded, think it either their duty or their privilege, to become disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The story of the coldness, and carelessness, and practical infidelity of the majority of our countrymen, needs not now to be told. It is telling itself in the character and impress which it is leaving on our national habits, thoughts, and modes and principles of action. One day, perhaps not to any one of us who now walk the earth, full of buoyant hope and expectation, but to those who shall come after, it may be a story of what *has been*; of the mercy, long-suffering, and, at last, retributive justice, of God Almighty. I would, that the voice of Scripture, and of the Church, its authorized interpreter, might penetrate into every dwelling in our vast country, and into every heart; leading us to exclaim with erring and penitent Israel, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God!"¹ I would that every man among us might feel it to be his duty to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,"² then should we gladly "be subject unto the higher powers;"³ then should we cheerfully and readily "render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom cus-

1) 1 Kings xviii. 39.

2) Rom. xiii. 14.

tom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor:"¹ then should we "submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake:" then should we be well fitted to "honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."² It would then be seen and felt, that the words of the wise monarch of Israel are universally true;—"righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."³

On this day of public thanksgiving for the mercies and benefits of another year, which a benignant Providence has showered upon us with no sparing hand, it is especially proper that we call to mind, and bless God for the continuance and abundance of spiritual privileges, which He affords through the medium of His Church. I have before alluded to this inestimable benefit: but, even at the risk of seeming tedious, I shall again insist upon it, with an eye to its peculiar fitness on this occasion. Among us, the Church has been planted, and watered by the dews of Divine grace, has not only taken root downward, but has also borne fruit upward. It is within the reach of all. It has grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength; and it is our humble hope and prayer that it may soon, as it will ultimately, be made the efficient instrument in the hands of our Lord and Master, for the conversion and enlightening of our own and other lands. It has blessed many a town and village with its high and holy ministrations; and made many a home bright and joyful with a sense of the Saviour's presence. It has trained up thousands for immortality, who, having fought the good fight of faith, have gone to receive and wear the crown of righteousness and peace for ever. It has borne full and convincing testimony against the corruptions and wickedness of the world; and has not spared to raise aloud its warning voice, through its ministry, worship, and sacraments. And to you, my brethren, year after year, has it been holding out the bread of life, and calling upon you to eat, and live for ever. Its blessed privileges have not been taken away; but God has continued it among us, as a

1) Rom. xiii. 1, 7.

2) 1 Pet. ii. 13, 17.

3) Prov. xiv. 34.

witness and standing proof of His mercy and long-suffering. Though but little fruit has been brought forth, and though perhaps justice has plead against us, saying, "cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"¹ yet the Saviour has interceded for us, and through Him it has been spared for another year, in mercy and in warning. May we take heed to the warning! May this village, which, for so many years, has neglected or despised the riches of God's grace herein afforded, be aroused to a realizing sense of its guilt against Him, and of the pearl of great price which it has rudely thrust away!

For this great and especial mercy, we ought always to give thanks "unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Both as a nation and as a people held together by the ties of kindred and personal friendships, we ought to be thankful for that the Church of Christ, in all its purity and fulness, has been planted among us, and has been sanctified to us, as the appointed way that leadeth unto life. If we rightly apprehend these things, we shall be more truly grateful for temporal blessings, and estimate more justly their value and importance. If we feel, and by a living faith are assured, that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,"² O how will our hearts glow with gratitude and love; how readily will we see our Father's gracious hand pouring out rich blessings upon all; and how gladly will we say, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits;"³ for it well becometh the just to be thankful.

Let, then, this view of our duty and our privileges throw a holy calm over us and our doings; and let it incite us to greater diligence and watchfulness, in our respective spheres of influence and example, that we may be truly and heartily thankful all the days of our lives. In the words of the present eloquent and learned Bishop of Maryland, whom to

1) Luke xiii. 7.

2) Rom. v. 8.

3) Ps. ciii. 1, 2.

know is to love and esteem, “let ‘renewal in righteousness and true holiness,’ be our steady aim. Setting the perfect standard of God’s law before us, and the blessed example of the Redeemer’s life, let us strive each to carry them out in *his own* life. Let us labor to the utmost, that men, seeing our light, may glorify our Father in heaven. Thus shall we receive blessings from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation. Heart could not form, nor tongue express a more comprehensive wish for our country, than that the glorious Gospel of the blessed God might thus flourish in it: that it might be universally esteemed, embraced, obeyed; that the hearts of the rulers and the people might be turned to the Lord as the heart of one man, and the kingdom become the Lord’s and His Christ’s. Happy is the nation that is in such a case. Yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God!”¹

1) Ps. cxliv. 15.

1) Bp. WHITTINGHAM, *Sermon on a Day of Public Humiliation and Prayer*, 1832, p. 38.



SERMON XXXIII.

ON PROPER DEPARTMENT IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

ECCLES. v. 1, 2.—“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

THE subject presented to our notice in these words of Solomon, is of no little importance and interest. In consequence of its clear reference to that essential part of a Christian's duty, viz., assembling together with his brethren in the house of God, to pray and praise; and because of its manifest connection with the deportment most suitable on these solemn occasions, it may well claim our attention. If we are desirous, as Christians, to worship God in spirit and in truth, and if we come to His house with this sincere desire, the caution suggested by the wise monarch will not be lost upon us; but if we come, as too many do, with little or no thought on the subject; from habit or education; from a willingness to conform to the usual practice of the community in this respect; or with a wish and expectation to be pleased, rather than benefited, and brought to a right and deep sense of our condition as sinners before God;—if we come, under the influence of such motives, or without any motives at all, the result may easily be foreseen: the warning voice which speaks in the text will be unheeded; and there will be little care to remember, that it is the house of God in which we are; that we are professedly assembled to worship Him as He has commanded; and that all our

thoughts, words, and actions ought to be meet to the place, and the purpose, in and for which we are met together.

I cannot but deem it my duty to bring this subject before you, my brethren, at this time, not merely because of the interest which it possesses in itself, but more especially, on account of the evident inattention to it by a large portion of this congregation. I am compelled to feel, with the return of each Lord's Day, that these things ought not so to be; I am forced to witness many things which are entirely out of place and season in this house of God; and I am obliged to lament and grieve over the absence of right feelings, and right views, on so momentous a subject; consequently, I dare not refrain from lifting up the voice of exhortation and of warning; I dare not leave off to call upon and to beseech you to give heed unto the words of wisdom in the text:—"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." In our endeavors to be imbued with the spirit and wisdom of this portion of Holy Writ, let it be considered,—

I. That this is the house of God.

This is the place in which He condescends to dwell. Here the Lord of heaven and earth is pleased to make His abiding place. He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, much less this house, which is called by His name,—He, the Omnipotent, Omnipresent Jehovah, has promised that here He will manifest His presence, and will hear the prayers and supplications of His people who ask in His Son's name. It is the house of God; it is the temple of the Lord, in which we are this day met together; and forasmuch as it is His house, it is a holy place, for he is a holy God; it is a place which should fill our minds with awe and solemnity, because of the dread majesty of the Lord our God, who will not suffer His name or His house to be profaned with impunity:—not that I mean to say that there is,

or can be, any holiness in wood or stone, any moral excellence in inanimate matter; not that it is to be supposed that the Infinite Lord, who filleth all in all, can be circumscribed, or limited to any one place; far, very far from it; "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device;"¹—no, these are the miserable delusions of idolatry and paganism. Nevertheless, this is God's house, in the which it pleaseth Him to dwell, because it has been consecrated to His worship and service; because He has promised, that where two or three are assembled in His name, there is He in the midst of them. This house too is holy, because it is devoted to a holy purpose; it is "separated from all unhallowed, worldly, and common uses:"² and naught else is here to have place, save the holy worship of the all-holy Lord God Almighty. This house belongs not to man—it is the property of God—it is the free will offering of the members of Christ's body, who have desired to manifest the reality of their faith and love; and we know from the Word of truth that such "pious works have been, and are approved of, and graciously accepted by our heavenly Father."³ Therefore, my brethren, as this house has been solemnly set apart for the worship of God, and as every thing light, vain, and irreverent, is intended to be excluded from it, it is ever to be remembered, into the courts of whose house we are brought; that we stand upon holy ground; and that we are in the immediate presence of the Eternal God Himself.—As, however, men find no great difficulty in acknowledging the truth just declared,

1) Acts vii. 29. 2) See "*The Form of Consecration of a Church or Chapel.*"

3) When churches are built, they ought to have a greater value and esteem derived upon them by some peculiar consecration: for it is not enough barely to devote them to the public services of religion, unless they are also set apart with the solemn rites of a formal dedication. For by these solemnities the founders surrender all the right they have in them, to God, and make God Himself the sole owner of them. And formerly, whoever gave any lands or endowments to the service of God, gave it in a formal writing, sealed and witnessed, (as is now usual between man and man,) the tender of the gift being made upon the altar, by the donor upon his knees.—REV. CHARLES WHEATLEY, *On Common Prayer*, p. 93.

it need not now be dwelt upon. Let us then go a step further, and see,—

II. *Why, or for what purpose, we are assembled together in this house of God.*

I suppose that no one with the Book of Common Prayer in his hands, and with the ability to read it, can be in any doubt why he has come hither, or rather, perhaps, it ought to be said, why he is expected by the Church to come hither. If he comes, remembering where he is, and for what purpose only the creature can present himself before the Creator, it will be to unite in the Daily Morning and Evening Prayer which the Church prescribes. He and every Christian man will feel at once, that no worldly object draws us, day by day, into the courts of the Lord's house; but that we are met to worship God, as He has commanded; we are assembled to humble ourselves before God, and confess that we are miserable sinners, and to pray for pardon and restoration through the Saviour's all-atoning blood. We are to listen to God's Holy Word read in our ears; ever seeking to have it impressed upon our hearts, that its warnings, its exhortations, its threatenings, its promises, are addressed to each one of us. We are here, also, to praise as well as pray; to magnify the Lord our God for all the marvellous things which He has done for us; to offer up our hearty thanks for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; and especially, to lift up our hearts, in adoring gratitude, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. Whatever befits the character and condition of sinful, helpless, and dependent creatures, who have come to beseech their Almighty and most merciful Creator to look upon them with pity and compassion; whatever they feel they need, which He alone can give; is that for which they come here to pray.

I lay the more stress upon humiliation, prayer, and praise, as being the proper object of our assembling together, because of the prevailing inclination to exalt "preaching" to a rank which it was never meant to hold. I am far from

undervaluing the public expositions of the Word of God, as a powerful and divinely appointed mean of instruction and comfort ; I believe them calculated to be meet and profitable to all ; yet I by no means think them worthy to be regarded as constituting the main business of our assembling together in this house of God. This, moreover, it will be found, is the light in which the Church views it. She provides, in her Liturgy, for *Daily Prayers*, morning and evening ; she evidently supposes, that her faithful children will be glad to draw near to God, in His holy temple, at the beginning and close of every day, that He may draw nigh to them ; but she makes no provision for sermons, or preaching, (as it is commonly called,) except on Sundays, and the intervening Holy Days. The Church, I conceive, would have us come before God as humble and penitent sinners, supplicating mercy through the Redeemer, rather than as eager to hear what the minister of God may say ; she intends that we shall hear, most of all, the Word of God Himself, seeing that she requires so much of Holy Scripture to be read, at Daily Prayers, as that it shall all be read in the ears of the people in the course of the year. Hence, it is plain, that we meet together in this house of God, to offer up our supplications and prayers at the throne of grace, as well as to present the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving ; to hear the pure Word of truth ; and to listen to the warnings and exhortations, which the ministers of God are commissioned to pronounce. There remains but one point further to be considered and that is,—

III. *What should be our deportment in the house of God?*

This being a matter of great moment to us all, demands much greater care and reflection than seem usually to have been given to it. Taking the wise provisions of the Church, in her Liturgy, as our guide, let us see if our deportment is such as it ought to be. The whole Church service manifestly goes upon the supposition, that they who present themselves here, in this house, *come for the purpose of worshipping God*. They are taught to look upon themselves as sinners, needing forgiveness, and grace to help in time of

temptation; and hence the language of humble confession and penitence is put into their mouths; and the postures most becoming men who are suppliants for mercy and favor, are expressly enjoined upon all. "The General Confession is to be said by the whole congregation after the minister, all kneeling," as the rubric directs. So, too, every one of the prayers, throughout the entire service, is required to be assented to by the people's hearty Amen, and by their "devoutly kneeling:"—not, it will be observed, a portion of the congregation, but the *whole* congregation; not a few who are sensible of what is proper, but *all* devoutly kneeling. It is expected of every individual, that he will do what is thus enjoined upon him; because, if he comes here to worship God, he evidently must intend to worship Him in the way and manner pointed out by the Church. Does he mean to pray? then he must kneel down, and utter audibly his petitions to Almighty God, along with the minister; or express his entire assent in the way directed, when the prayers are said by the minister alone. Does he wish to hear, and profit by the reading of God's holy Word? Does he intend to sing praises unto Him; or to listen to the discourses of him whom He has commissioned and sent? then, plainly, he ought to do all this with seriousness and devotion; he ought to do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.¹

- 1) "When once thy foot enters the Church, be bare.

God is more there than thou: for thou art there

Only by His permission. Then beware,

And make thyself all reverence and fear.

Kneeling ne'er spoiled silk stocking: quit thy state.

All equal are within the Church's gate.

Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:

Praying's the end of preaching. O be drest;

Stay not for the other pin: why thou hast lost

A joy for it worth worlds. Thus hell doth jest

Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee,

Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee.

In time of service seal up both thine eyes,

And send them to thy heart; that, spying sin,

All this, I am aware, may seem to some an uncalled-for particularity ; but it is only to those who have not considered the matter as they ought to do. Others may think, that this is something which might better be left to every one to do as he chooses ; but I am certain this course would be as wrong as it would be to leave every man to have just what religion, or just as much or little religion, as he chooses or fancies ; there is one way, and only one way, which is right, and in this we ought to walk. If it is true, as has just been declared, that this is the house of God, the place in which the Lord of heaven and earth vouchsafes to dwell ; and if it is true, that we meet here to worship Him in spirit and in truth ; then, of course, our thoughts, words, and actions, ought to be in accordance with both this holy place, and the momentous object that calls us together. God sees our hearts, and knows our thoughts ; He hears our every word, and spies out our every act ; therefore, it behooves us to be ever watchful ; lest our thoughts be far away, on the world, or our pleasures, or our business, or our plans ; lest our words be spoken at random, without knowing or meaning what we are saying ; or lest our actions be careless, and unbecoming, or even worse than this, proud and unconcerned, as though it were an act of sufferance, or of favor, to be present in God's Sanctuary.¹

They may weep out the stains by them did rise :
Those doors being shut, all by the ear comes in.
Who marks, in Church time, others' symmetry,
Makes all their beauty his deformity.

Let vain or busy thoughts have there no part :
Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasures thither.
Christ purged His temple ; so must thou thy heart.
All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together
To cozen thee. Look to thy actions well ;
For Churches either are our heaven or hell."

HERBERT's *Temple*, p. 15.

1) The respect and reverence the primitive Christians used to show in the Church, as the solemn place of worship, and where God did more peculiarly manifest His presence, we find to have been very great. "They came into the Church (saith St. Chrysostom), as into the palace of the great King, with fear and trembling ;" upon which account he there presses the highest modesty and

Enough has been said to show what *ought to be* our deportment in this house of God ; it will be profitable for us to inquire what *is* our deportment, and whether it is becoming this sacred day and place. I am constrained to say, as I have done before, that there are some, yea, many who, I trust and pray, come here to worship God, who yet take little or no part in the services expressly appointed for, and demanded of, the *whole congregation*. I am constrained and grieved to say, that there are those who act here in such a way, as would be considered insulting, if not grossly dishonorable, to a man like ourselves ; O how much more grievously insulting must it be to the Almighty and Omniscent Lord ! Some, if not many, treat the prayers as tiresome and tedious things, that might be shortened to advantage, and even dispensed with almost altogether ; and numbers will sit as unmoved, and apparently unconcerned, as though they had no interest in praying ; as though it was a matter of choice for sinful and helpless man to pray or not, just as he sees fit. I hesitate not to say, indeed I am compelled in my Master's name to say, that this is both wrong and wicked. It were far better,—sad and exceedingly sinful as the alternative may be,—it were far better, to leave the courts of the Lord's house untrod, than to come and stand in them, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace, by

gravity upon them. Before their going into the Church, they used to wash, at least their hands, as Tertullian probably intimates, and Chrysostom expressly tells us, carrying themselves while they were there with the profoundest silence and devotion. Nay, so great was the reverence they bore to the Church, that the Emperors themselves, (who otherwise never went without their guard about them,) when they went into the Church, used to lay down their arms, to leave their guard behind them, and to put off their crowns ; reckoning that the less ostentation they made of power and greatness there, the more firmly the imperial majesty would be entailed upon them. Examples, one would think, sufficient to excite us to use all such outward testimonies of respect as are enjoined by the Church, and established by the custom of the age we live in, as marks of honor and reverence : a duty recommended by Solomon, who charges us to “ look to our feet when we go into the house of God ;” being an allusion, in particular, to the rite of pulling off the shoes, used by the Jews, and other nations of the East, when they came into sacred places ; and is as binding upon us to look to ourselves by uncovering our heads, and giving all other external testimonies of reverence and devotion.—REV. CHARLES WHEATLEY, *On Common Prayer*, p. 94.

shameful exhibitions of our vanity, ignorance, and self-conceit. My brethren, I speak unto you as the ambassador for Christ, and I must speak plainly and pointedly. As there must be no fear or regard of man before my eyes, in discharging my duty to you, so I trust that there is neither. Look to it, then, I beseech as well as warn you; look to it, ye whose consciences are touched with a sense of the great dishonor, which, it may be unwittingly, ye have done to God in this house, that ye repent and amend; see that ye do it speedily; see that ye do it thoroughly; lest a worse thing happen unto you;—for “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it.”¹

1) Amos viii. 11, 12.



OUR weapons are faith, hope, charity, righteousness, truth, patience, prayer unto God; and our sworde, wherewith we smite our enemies, we beate and batter and beare down all falsehoode, is the WORDE OF GOD. With these weapons, under the banner of the Crosse of Christe we do fight, ever having our eye upon our GRAND MASTER, DUKE, and CAPTAIN, CHRISTE.

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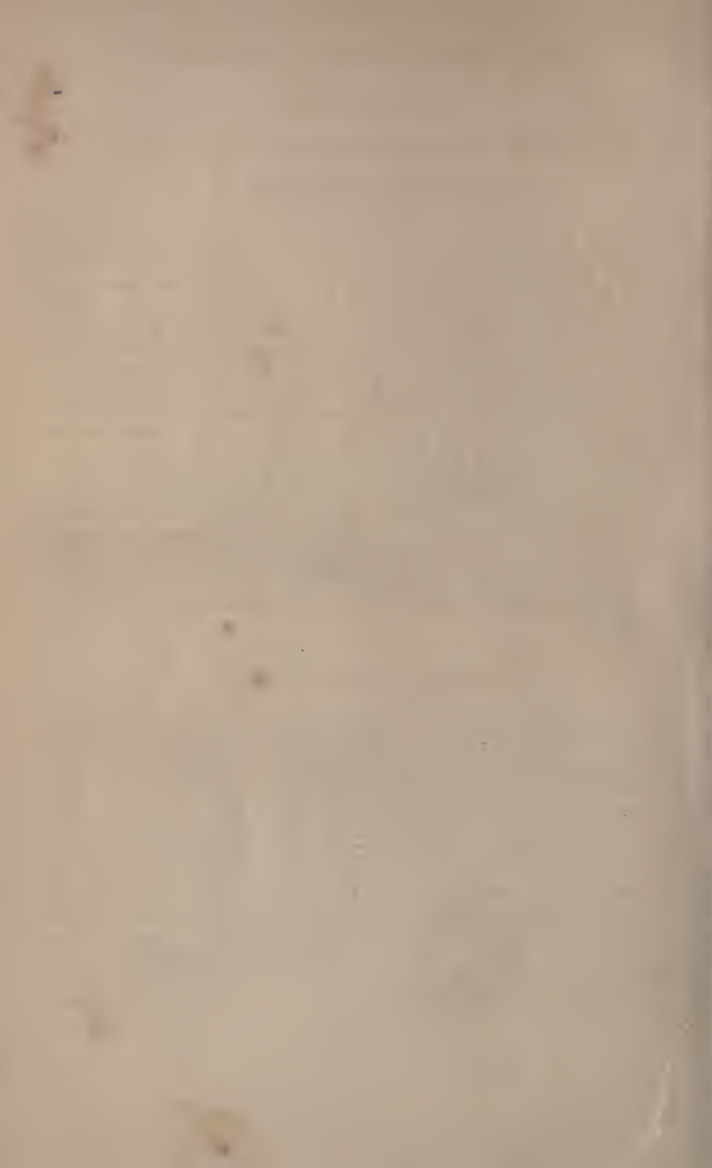
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